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Dissertation

PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY OF FRANCIS ASBURY

by

DONALD DELBERT DOUGLASS

(B.S., Boston University, 1946; S.T.B., Boston University, 1949)

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APPROVED

by

First Reader . . . Paul E. Johnson . . . .

PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY OF RELIGION

Second Reader . Richard M. Cameron . . . .

PROFESSOR OF CHURCH HISTORY

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

I. THE PROBLEM OF THE DISSERTATION

The problem of this study is to determine the concepts of the pastor's task as revealed in the life and ministry of Bishop Francis Asbury. The life and leadership of Asbury tended to form and direct the early Methodist societies in their formative years. Asbury was not a psychologist, yet a study of his life will reveal a deep understanding of human personality. The study will disclose what in Asbury's thinking was important in fulfilling his ministerial office.

The appointment of Asbury as Superintendent of the colonial Methodism by John Wesley, and his later elevation to the office of Bishop by the Christmas Conference of 1784 shows the high esteem in which Asbury was held by his fellow ministers. The life and ministry of Bishop Asbury became the foundation upon which Methodism was able to go forward, grow and expand into a great Church. This study should reveal the emphasis in the Bishop's successful ministry. It will follow his stress on the group ministry and compare it with the ministry to the individual. Did Asbury find counseling an important part of his pastoral work? It is this writer's belief that counseling served an important role in Asbury's pastorate. His counseling may not have proven the most effective but can stand as a marker from which to formulate standards. What were the minister's responsibilities toward the sick and shut-in? There appear certain basic patterns which can stand as principles for guiding the present-day minister in his search for more efficient methods in his ministry to the sick. In like manner, family counseling and individual concern became a part of his total pastoral ministry.

The pastoral psychologist concerns himself first with the question as to how a person can be helped to live with some sense of meaning. The new psychosomatic outlook in medicine has had its emphasis in the pastoral ministry. The minister is beginning to see the unity which exists between mind and body.

With this new approach the minister can no longer be concerned solely with the soul of man. His treatment must seek to bring about a kind of psychological and spiritual reorganization of the person's experience that will eliminate the distressing elements within his personality.

Since the beginning of religious history spiritual leaders have found it necessary to use psychological principles in their ministry. Until recent years these practices were at best unscientific. The more observant minister learned a little from the process of trial and error. There was generally, however, no conscious formulation of psychological principles involved.

The period of Francis Asbury is a small segment of religious history. A study of the life and work of Asbury will reveal his methods and practices. Even though they were imperfect in the light of the more scientific work of the present day, they are a section of the bridge which leads to the ascending development of pastoral psychology.

Asbury was chosen from the vast area of the yet unchartered history of pastoral psychology because of the writer's interest in and the availability of Asbury's personal journals. These Journals represent the most detailed personal records dealing with the latter half of eighteenth century American Methodism.

There is also a nationally renewed interest in Francis Asbury which has in part resulted from the recognition of his greatness by the Library of Congress, and by their listing him as one of the one hundred and twelve great Americans whose writings are historically significant and deserve editing for publication.[1]

2. THE METHODOLOGY OF THE DISSERTATION

i. The Analysis of the Journals of Francis Asbury.

The material for this study is primarily historical; it consists first of all of the personal journals written by Francis Asbury, documentary evidence, and related writings of or about the period. The primary sources are Asbury's own writings. The study recognizes the relationship of pastoral psychology to the pastor's entire life and thought; everything he has written therefore has some bearing upon the thesis. His writings, however, are limited largely to his Journals and personal letters. It must be recognized that everything is not of equal importance. Each letter must therefore be read and considered in its relationship to this thesis. The Journals had to be read through as a whole until there began to develop a general impression of Francis Asbury as a pastor. The entries required cataloguing in order that areas of emphasis might stand out in proper perspective.

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[1] Edmund F. Mansure (Administrator), A National Program for the Publication of Historical Documents (A report to the President of the United States) National Historical Publications Commission, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., 1954.

(1) The Classification and Use of Journal Entries. In the use of Journal entries two basic principles were followed. The single entry did not necessarily establish a pattern nor did it deny the existence of the universality of such a practice. The validity of a psychological concept could not be based solely on the frequency of a type of entry. It was necessary, therefore, that the entries be viewed in this study from both the holistic and nomothetic perspective.

A number of entries, because of their general nature, were partially omitted. They were considered in their relationship to the other entries in the attempt to establish either a location or a time span. It seemed the better method was to permit the areas into which the entries were to be catalogued to develop as the various entries were being studied. As the study progressed certain fields of pastoral emphasis began to emerge.

Out of these various emphases came such groupings as: the small group, family visitation, visitation of the sick, visitation of the prisoner, the colonial funeral, counseling, and the preacher. When the cataloguing had been completed, it was possible to view these given areas as a whole in better perspective. All entries dealing with the class meeting and counseling could be considered as a group. Out of this developed certain general impressions concerning Asbury's over-all attitudes and methods. From these general impressions were formulated basic psychological principles which were to receive either support or rejection when examined in the light of individual entries.

The personal journal has permitted the psychologist to deal effectively in the field of the concrete science rather than at the ideological level. Allport has said that "The most successful excursions of psychological scientists into the fields of literature, political science, and history have come about through their analysis of personal documents."[1]

Out of the life and work of Francis Asbury can be formulated certain working postulates for the modern pastoral psychologist from which he can formulate his own psychological principles. He can thereby use the experiences of the past as a guide for the future. Before a personal document can be of value in scientific study the writer must determine the purpose of the author in writing his Journal.

(2) The Purpose for which the Journals were Written. It is possible to suggest many motives in terms of Asbury's original incentive for writing his journals. It is, however, impossible to say as to who may have encouraged his writings or if he did so spontaneously.

There seems to be some merit in accepting Asbury's own explanation for his keeping a journal. In his entry of July 24, 1774 Asbury writes, "On September 3, 1771 I embarked for America, and for my own private satisfaction began to keep an imperfect Journal."[2] With the passing of fifteen years Asbury seems to have felt the need of publishing his journals to let his friends and the world know how he had employed his time.[1] This change of attitude could at least in part have resulted from the constant criticism by a few scattered members of the colonial Church. Some of these animadversions found their way into the English Methodist Church and to Wesley.

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[1] Gordon W. Allport, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1951), p. 176.

[2] Francis Asbury, Journal of Francis Asbury (New York: Bangs and Mason, 1821), I, 121.

At least in 1786 one of Asbury's motives could have been considered as that of defending his activities in the American Church. Such an attitude of defense is seen in his entry of September 19, 1786: "I have been a little grieved with letters from ----; but it is in vain to look for more than man in the best of men. My witness is on high and I shall have respect to my Great Shepherd in all things."[2]

By the year 1798 Asbury began to see his journals in their historical significance. This afterthought may have been significant in his editing the journals for publication but would not have altered that which already had been written. It can never be fully understood why he insisted on his Journals being published in America when he could have sent them to England and sold them, but as he said, "Money is not my object."[3]

In his later years Asbury had begun to realize the historical significance of his writings. They were to him a record of the struggles of an early Church, struggles which would soon be forgotten, except as they were exhibited in his journals and the other records of that day. In

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (August 28, 1786), I, 517-518.

2. Ibid., I, 518.

3. Ibid., (January 29, 1798), II, 369.

1815 when Asbury completed his journals up through the year 1807 he looked upon them with a sense of satisfaction. He writes:

> We have examined and approved up to 1807. As a record of the early history of Methodism in America, my Journal will be of use; and accompanied by the minutes of the conference, will tell all that will be necessary to know. I have buried in shades all that will be proper to forget, in which I am personally concerned; if truth and I have been wronged, we have both witnessed our day of triumph.[1]

Thus it was that in the passing of thirty-four years Asbury feels the experience of writing a journal was not in vain, nor did it remain as a product for his own satisfaction, but a document of history.

It is likely that Asbury was greatly influenced in beginning his Journal by the example of John Wesley. The continued writing became less of a self-analysis and more of a history for later generations. The motivating force in the writing of a journal influences the selection of material and the accuracy of information.

(3) The Accuracy of the Journals. Asbury admits that he has made mistakes in the writing of his journal. The Journals of Francis Asbury, however, are a remarkable reflection of Asbury's personality. It is unusual in the light of his extensive travels, inconveniences, and want of a place to retire on many occasions, that Asbury was able to keep a Journal which was in any way accurate. Asbury knew his own limitations and recognized the difficulties under which his Journal was written. He often lamented the fact that he was unable to furnish more satisfactory information. He writes, "In keeping a Journal of my life, I have unavoidably labored under many embarrassments and inconveniences; my constant

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (June 29, 1815), III, 454.

traveling, the want of places of retirement and conveniences to write, my frequent calls to the pulpit, my extensive epistolary correspondence and my debility, and sometimes inability of body." Tipple, in referring to the inaccuracies of Asbury's Journal, felt it was "somewhat remarkable that he kept any Journal at all."[1]

There are to be found inaccuracies in the Journal as to date, places, and individuals. One of these areas of confusion as to date is seen in his entries of April 3, 1773. Asbury preaches in Baltimore on April 3, leaves Baltimore on April 8, and arrives in Philadelphia on April 14. Without explanation or making an attempt to explain, he gives the impression that he was in New York on April 4.[2]

The editorial revisions were begun by Asbury himself and have been continued by Tipple and Clark. Clark, in his editorial research, notes the inaccuracy in the dates of the 6, 7, 8, and 9th of August, 1772 by one day.[3]

Tipple makes a similar correction in listing the date of October 26, 1799,[4] the date listed by Asbury in his Journal as a corrected date of October 28, 1799.[5]

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[1] Ezra Squier Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1904), p. 10.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journals (April 1773), I, 68-70.

[3] Francis Asbury, "Incomplete notes on Asbury's Journal," ed. by Elmer T. Clark and others for new edition of Journal to be published in 1956 or 1957. (London: Epworth Press), v. i, August, 1772 item 32, (Typewritten Copy borrowed from Elmer T. Clark, Lake Junaluska, N. C.).

[4] Asbury, op. cit., II, 430.

[5] Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, p. 462.

Tipple speaks of there being important omissions in the Journal such as Asbury's congratulatory address to George Washington in New York on May 28, 1789 at the time of Washington's first inauguration.[1] Asbury readily admitted both omissions and inaccuracies. After fifteen years of keeping a journal he began to think of its publication and on August 28, 1786, during a period of confinement, looked over his journals, "Some things I corrected, and some I expunged."[2]

On another occasion Asbury reveals his sense of humor in writing:

> I was employed in revising my Journal. I am like Mr. Whitefield who, being presented with one of his extempore sermons taken in shorthand, could not bear to see his own face.[3]

The original hand-written journals were personally written by Asbury in his own shorthand. Some of the rewriting and translation was assigned by Asbury to others. In the process of rewriting the copyist was often not fully conversant with Asbury's shorthand and was found to have added to the already imperfect document. On December 5, 1800 Asbury mentions this in his entry:

> Today I have been occupied in correcting a transcript of my journal, that one had copied for me, who did not well understand my shorthand. The original was written in my great illness, very imperfectly; but when I reflect on my situation at that time, I wonder that it is as well as it is.[4]

Asbury, in his editing, made every effort to perfect his journal. From

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1. Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, pp. 279-280.

2. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 518.

3. Ibid., (January 29, 1798), II, 369.

4. Ibid., II, 486.

time to time he himself made corrections; in time of illness he would read as long as his strength permitted and then listen while others read.

The Journal was concededly imperfect, written under the most impossible circumstances, and yet the mistakes are insignificant and can in no wise be considered as impairing the essential facts. The Journals remain the most complete record of early Methodism and bear a distinctive message.

ii. Journal Analysis as a Psychological Tool.

What is the source material for what goes on in a person's mind? To understand a man, and through a man, a period, it is necessary to know the mental and emotional states of that particular individual. When this person has become a part of history, the sources are limited to material written about the individual in his diaries, journals, and letters. In the case of Francis Asbury the greatest source of primary documents are to be found in his personal letters and journals. In the present study these become the material with which the writer must begin his analysis.

(1) The Use of Personal Documents. The right of the psychologist to use the personal document in scientific research is thoroughly examined by Gordon Allport in his report of the study conducted by the "Committee on Appraisal of Research of the Social Science Research Council in carrying out its mandate to appraise research in discharging 'the Council's responsibility for the improvement of the quality of research in the social sciences.'"[1]

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[1] Allport, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, p. viii.

Allport concludes as a result of his study that most of our psychological writers employ personal documents uncritically. They are not inexpert but concern themselves almost exclusively with the living, graphic portrayal of the mental life of their subjects. Previous to William James little, if any, attention is given to modern scientific standards nor the objectivity of their study. The classical productions of the psychological science are in a sense only the personal records of the individual. It is then expected, as Allport points out, that "the introspective deliverances of the philosopher-psychologist were necessarily infallible, and that they were sufficient and typical for mankind at large."[1]

Psychological science passed quickly from phenomenology to the experiment. It was expected that the laboratory would produce the same uniformity as had been previously assumed but this did not happen. A difference of opinion resulted, but was resolved in favor of the use of case studies and personal documents.

William James, in his Gifford lectures, found himself driven to the use of the personal document as the most feasible way to approach his new psychology. G. Stanley Hall introduced the controlled questionnaire as an objective approach. This is a more objective approach but is limited to the study of living persons. Sigmund Freud also made extensive use of personal documents. Freud did not feel that it was necessary for a person to know the one he was studying individually but could derive his diagnosis from what the individual had written. Unlike James, Freud did not first present his case histories and then draw his conclusions. Freud first formulated the theory and then attempted to gather case histories to prove the theory. He seemed to regard even the single case as the exemplification of a general truth when it was in harmony with his own acquaintance with numerous cases.

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[1] Allport, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, pp. 3-4.

In 1907 Clifford Beers introduced the absorbing story of his own experiences which has become a classical psychological study.[1] In the scientific view it is lacking in objectivity, but has found universal acceptance as a significant clinical document. There has been a continued increase in the use of personal documents in the last half century, and with it a growing critical attention to improving the method.

The array of critical and experimental studies reviewed by Allport shows an improvement in both method and efficiency in the use of the single document. In 1938 Blumer, at the instigation of the Social Science Research Council, prepared a critique of The Polish Peasant. The study from the psychologist's point of view could be called sociological. The four criteria he used in evaluation of a document or a series of documents were: "their adequacy for the purpose for which they are employed, their representativeness, their reliability, and the validity of the interpretations."[2]

It is the ambiguity of the interaction between the theory and the inductive material which is the essence of the methodological problem of personal documents. In 1925 Krueger made a four-fold classification of the various types of autobiographies: the Confessional document, the Egotistical document, the Scientific autobiographies, and the Naive document.[1]

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[1] Clifford W. Beers, A Mind That Found Itself; an Autobiography, 5th edit., rev., (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1928).

[2] Allport, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, p. 20.

Ten years later John Dollard laid down six criteria for the evaluation of life histories. He listed these as criteria:[2]

> The subject must be viewed as a specimen in a cultural series.
>
> The organic motors of action ascribed must be socially relevant.
>
> The peculiar role of the family group in transmitting the culture must be recognized.
>
> The specific method of elaboration of organic materials into social behavior must be shown.
>
> The continuous related character of experience from childhood through adulthood must be stressed.
>
> The 'social situation' must be carefully and continuously specified as a factor.

The life history material itself must be organized and conceptualized. Many of Dollard's criteria are not applicable to the Journals of Francis Asbury. Dollard has given little attention to the constitutional and temperamental factors in personality. The basis of evaluation is therefore most acceptable in the framework of Dollard's study.

To establish a criterion of any kind it is first necessary for the author thoroughly to understand the purpose for which his criterion is being created. It is as important to understand the beliefs which journal-writers are indirectly betraying, as it is the ones they are

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1. E. T. Krueger, Autobiographical Documents and Personality (unpublished, Chicago University Library, 1925).

2. John Dollard, Criteria for the Life History (New York: Peter Smith, 1949), pp. 13-33.

wishing the public to see displayed.

Investigators are increasingly concerning themselves with observer reliability but there remains the problem of establishing the validity of interpretations, discovering the predictive power of the documents, the classification, and the detection of self-deception.

In his study Allport also considers the many uses for which personal documents are written. He lists these various uses of personal documents as: The study of the religious experiences of the mental life of adolescents. They may be put to didactic use, practical use as a record of experience. They may be used for autoanalysis, historical diagnoses, or as a supplement to psychiatric examination. The writer may use it for verification and validation of his experiences. They may be used for the understanding of the mental effects of special physical conditions. They may be used for the psychologizing of the social sciences and of literature. They may be used to assist in the construction of tests and questionnaires. Allport feels that no one "can doubt that any technique that serves so many ends is worthy of sustained study and continued improvement."[1]

There are numerous motives behind the original incentive that induces the individual to write. The Journal may have been the author's own spontaneous product or it may have been instigated by an outsider. A few of the reasons for writing a journal could be listed as: special pleading, monetary gain, assignment, assistance to diagnosis, exhibitionism, literary pleasure, desire for personal perspective, redemptive value to the author, scientific interest, and a desire for immortality. This is in no way a complete list and does not include the unintentional or incidental documents that an author may have written.

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[1] Allport, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, p. 52.

The autobiography is the commonest form of personal document. It varies in both its size and style. The long and detailed writings are called the comprehensive autobiography, while the short and specialized in content is more often referred to as the topical autobiography; and that written not strictly in the author's own words is the edited autobiography. The primary value of the autobiography is that it gives that inner half of the life which is ordinarily hidden from the scientist. In evaluating the autobiographical writings it is necessary that the interpreter realize that a few lines will often represent many years, while page upon page could represent a single episode.

The topical autobiographies are more likely to fix the investigator's attention upon a small segment of the author's life. The edited autobiography will contain at least in a small degree the interpretations of the editor. He will, in the process of editing and by his deliberate selection or rejection of a document, begin the chain of interpretations. It is difficult to establish rules which will distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate editing. If only mild condensation and rearrangement has taken place, the altering can have value and the document can be of value for the purpose for which it is to be used.

The intimate diaries and personal letters reveal more of the subjective side of the personality than any other writings. The diary reveals that which the author thinks is important to himself, and is therefore limited by the writer's expressive ability. Diaries can be listed as: intimate journals, memoirs, and logs or inventories. The value of the diary can be greatly increased in its scientific value when stricter standards are being applied to its formative period.

The use of the letter in psychological research is complicated by the necessity of considering both the recipient and the sender. Up to now the psychologist has made far less use of letters because of these extraneous determinants.

It is true in the use of any personal documents for psychological study that the document may be unrepresentative of the total sample; it may possess a fascination with style; it may be non-objective; it is always difficult to validate its contents; and many statements may range all the way from unconscious rationalization to a deliberate deception. Man is often blind to his true motives, and again, for what might appear some unexplained reason, he will oversimplify an important incident. He is affected by his moods, along with errors in memory. The tendency has been to disregard the personal document as biased and superficial. Allport concludes from his study "That the document may serve as a first step for a scientist in informing him of problems and points worthy of investigation."[1]

The subject matter of psychology has always tended to be general and elusive. It has been created out of what has appeared an invisible process and from invisible causes. Its complexity only calls for more than usual concrete inspection and analysis. It is at this point that the personal document can give the field of study its objective experiences with which to work.

(2) The Use of Entry Analysis as a Psychological Tool. If the personal document is to be of value to the interpreter it will be through

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[1] Allport, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science, p. 140.

the use of entry analysis. The first major psychological work of importance in which there was the use of entry analysis was at the turn of the century by William James, Varieties of Religious Experience. This work was based almost exclusively upon the analysis and comparison of personal documents.

The progressive use of the journal, the diary, and the letter in psychological study has encouraged such studies as those carried on by Allport, and Baldwin. In 1940 Alfred Baldwin wrote an article on "The Statistical Analysis of the Structure of a Single Personality," in which he stressed two major points: that the frequency with which an item is mentioned will be of importance if the material is an adequate sample of the subject's behavior and if the material has not been written for a specific purpose; and that any two items appearing in the same incident are related.[1]

The Journals of Francis Asbury can be considered as an adequate sample of his behavior for the use in scientific study. The frequency with which an item is mentioned is of importance only within limited time spans in his ministry. The changing emphasis in Asbury's extended ministry makes it impossible to compare statistical frequencies of his earlier ministry with those of his later ministry.

The importance of the studies of Allport and Baldwin to the present study has been to point out to the writer such areas of limitation as the stress on item frequency and continuity of thought within a journal entry and between journal entries. The use of Journal entries in scientific research has been sufficiently extensive to permit the writer to proceed with an increased sense of objectivity as a scientific psychologist.

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[1] Alfred L. Baldwin, "The Statistical Analysis of the Structure of a Single Personality," Psychological Bulletin, 37 (1940), 518-519.

3. RELATED WORKS ON FRANCIS ASBURY

No writer until the present has attempted to examine the pastoral psychology that was a dynamic force in Asbury's pastoral ministry. The only other work that has attempted a Journal analysis of Francis Asbury was that performed by H. K. Carroll at the request of the Asbury Centenary Memorial Association in 1916. Carroll's production was primarily historical in nature and purpose, but used in a large part the Journals as a primary source. Mr. Carroll says of his Centenary volume:

> This little book has been compiled chiefly from the historical works of Jesse Lee, Nathan Bangs, Abel Stevens, and Seaman's Annals of New York Methodism and Dr. Tipple's Heart of Asbury's Journal. The purpose is to serve those who want a condensed description of Asbury and the early itinerants and the times and conditions under which they did their heroic work for American Methodism.[1]

In 1904 Ezra Squier Tipple made a careful study of Asbury's Journals with the purpose of editing a new and improved edition of the original journals.[2] Other historical writings have concerned themselves largely with the life and ministry of Francis Asbury. The earliest of these was a volume written by William Larrabee in 1852.[3] Like its companion volume of a year later it is general in its approach and gives much attention to Asbury's co-workers.

In 1858 William Strickland wrote on the life and times of Asbury.[4]

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1. Henry King Carroll, The Francis Asbury Centenary Volume (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1916), p. 5.

2. Ezra Squier Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal.

3. William C. Larrabee, Asbury and His Colaborers, ed. D. W. Clark (New York: Carlton and Lanahan, 1852).

4. William Peter Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury (New York: Carlton and Porter, 1858).

It presents a more complete picture than the earlier works. Asbury is seen in his relationships with other people and yet there has been included only those persons who have had a direct bearing on his life. Strickland took advantage of the personal resources to be found in persons yet living but who had labored with Asbury.

A volume filled with the personal touches in Asbury's life is that by Ezra Tipple.[1] It is a popular writing and lacks some of the biographical material found in some of the other works. Its greatest merit is in the presentation of Asbury as a person.

For those who wish to see Asbury's relationship to the church, there are the volumes by Carroll[2] and Duren.[3] These are works written more from the point of view of a Church history. They show Asbury as he fits into the growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The authors of the above volumes were primarily interested in revealing the life and times of Francis Asbury and only incidently might present a side remark which could be viewed as an interpretation of the pastoral work of Francis Asbury. A new edition of Asbury's Journal is expected from the press in 1957. The new edition will include 'Asbury's Letters and Journal' and is being produced for the Epworth Press of London under the editorship of Elmer T. Clark of Lake Junaluska, North Carolina.[1] The writer wishes to express his appreciation to Mr. Clark and the Epworth Press for their cooperation in making available unpublished notes on the new Journal.

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[1] Ezra Squier Tipple, Francis Asbury the Prophet of the Long Road (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1916).

[2] Henry King Carroll, Francis Asbury in the Making of American Methodism (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1923).

[3] William Larkin Duren, Francis Asbury Founder of American Methodism and Unofficial Minister of State (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1928).

This study toward a new edition of the Journal was instigated by the suggestion of the Library of Congress to the World Methodist Council of the Methodist Church as previously mentioned and on their suggestion to the Methodist Historical Society. Exhaustive research has been done through the local Methodist Historical Societies in an effort to check and clarify many of the vague details listed in Asbury's Journal. These are historical in nature and though enlightening to the pastoral psychologist do not present a systematic study of the pastoral psychology of Francis Asbury's ministry.

Another doctoral study entitled "Francis Asbury, American Methodist Statesman -- A Drama in Three Acts" is being written by Donald McKay Mauck, graduate student, Church History, Boston University School of Theology. The play will be limited to thirteen years in Asbury's career extending from 1771-1784.

As far as the writer has been able to discover this will be the first effort to reveal the pastoral psychology of Francis Asbury, one of America's outstanding colonial pastors.

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1. Frank H. Cumbers, (book Steward) Letter to Donald D. Douglass, 13th April, 1956 (unpublished).

CHAPTER II

THE BIOGRAPHY OF FRANCIS ASBURY

1. PARENTS

Thirty-six years passed from the death of Asbury before any effort was made to write the life of Francis Asbury. In 1752 William C. Larrabee collected together such biographical and historical material as were accessible to him and wrote what he saw fit to call a graphic view of the career of Asbury:

> I have not designed to produce formal biography nor stately history, but to present to general readers a graphic view of the prominent and interesting events in the career of Asbury.[1]

Wakeley credits the lack of a biography to a formal request by the Bishop to his traveling companion, Rev. Henry Boehm, whom Asbury had named as the executor of his last will and testament and requested that Asbury's life be not written. Wakeley says:

> The bishop gave formal direction to the Rev. Henry Boehm, his traveling companion for five years, and one of the executors of his last will and testament, that his life should not be written, and wished him to use his influence to prevent it. It is singular that, although many have attempted it, none have succeeded. It would seem that the bishop's request is to be complied with to the very letter.
>
> I never had the pleasure of seeing Bishop Asbury--when he died I was seven years of age. But with his last surviving traveling companion, the venerable Henry Boehm, just mentioned, who is now eighty years old, I have spent weeks in reading the journal he kept of their labours and journeyings, and in writing, as he dictated, an account of the scenes in which they were such prominent actors many years ago.[2]

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[1] William C. Larrabee, Asbury and His Colaborers, p. 3.

[2] J. B. Wakeley, Heroes of Methodism (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1856), p. 13.

The above statement was made in Wakeley's presence by Boehm, was never put into writing by Boehm and therefore must be accepted as an oral utterance. The fact remains that little was written concerning the early life of Francis Asbury except that which he himself wrote in 1792.[1] Other biographers, after consulting extra-journal information, have placed their own interpretations upon that which Asbury has written. Therefore, much of the Bishop's family and early boyhood remains but conjecture.

Asbury, in writing a brief account of his parents, says that his father was Joseph and his mother, Elizabeth Asbury.[2] There was some doubt, even in Asbury's own mind, as to the exact date of his birth and he suggests that it was either the twentieth or twenty-first of August, 1745. There is an even greater divergence of opinion among certain historians, with Wakeley offering the date of August 2, 1745 as Asbury's date of birth.[3] The majority of writers have tended toward the acceptance of the twentieth of August as the most accurate date.

i. Joseph Asbury.

George Smith would suggest that Joseph Asbury was one of the poorer members of a family of large landholders in Staffordshire. What Joseph lacked in vested funds he was to have made up for in industry and mental capacity.[4] The history concerning Asbury, however, is vague and lacks the necessary details which would either prove or disprove such statements. From Asbury's own account he considers his parents common people. His father must have been an industrious person to have led his son to believe that were he as saving as he was laborious, he could have been a wealthy man.[1]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 17, 1792), II, 156-160.

[2] Ibid., p. 157.

[3] Wakeley, Heroes of Methodism, p. 14.

[4] George G. Smith, Life and Labors of Francis Asbury (Nashville: Publishing House M. E. Church, South, 1896), p. 1.

Joseph was a gardener and farmer by trade and did well at his chosen profession. He was employed by two of the wealthiest families of the parish. From the father's side heredity did not offer sufficient promise of greatness for the son. The father was plain and with an intellect comportable with his rank and fortune. DuBose would point out that this is no impeachment nor even a depreciation of the family since it was the kind of individuals who made up the backbone of the Wesleyan revival.[2]

ii. Elizabeth Rogers Asbury.

The parentage of Elizabeth Rogers Asbury, mother of Francis Asbury, has been lost to recorded history. Elizabeth was the religious and perhaps the more dominating figure in the home. She was very devout and following the death of her only daughter at an early age, she became more and more actively religious. She had an exceptional intellect and her manner was serious, quiet, and her judgment was always clear and safe. This may have accounted in part for the success and ability of her son.

The religion of the home was therefore largely the heritage of the mother who, as Asbury says, was constantly urging his father to family reading and prayer. The mother, coming from Welsh stock, was somewhat emotional by nature. In her earlier years she was worldly but this all seemed to pass with the death of the infant daughter. In the years that followed she turned more and more to the consolation of religion, seeking the company of religious people, attending services and poring for hours over devotional books. It is said that "her house became a rendezvous for the 'people of God'".[1]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 16, 1792), II, 157.

[2] Horace M. DuBose, Francis Asbury (Nashville: Publishing House M. E. Church, South, 1909), p. 10.

This is the factual knowledge of Francis Asbury's parents. Beyond this the biographers have gone only by conjecture. Each writer seems to create his own theories and draw his own conclusions.

2. EARLY YEARS

Francis Asbury was born of humble parentage on either the twentieth or the twenty-first day of August, 1745 in England near the foot of Hampstead Bridge, in the parish of Handsworth, in Staffordshire about four miles from Birmingham.[2] He was the only son of the two children born to Joseph and Elizabeth Rogers Asbury. Little is known of the first few years of Asbury's life. The majority of biographers have omitted these early formative years but Larrabee summarizes them by saying that immediately following the death of Asbury's sister, Asbury "became thoughtful and serious."[3]

Francis presents an inkling of the sternness of his home during the first four or five years of his life. His parents were of the Church of England, people of the best type and Francis was carefully brought up.[1] There is a difference of opinion among authorities as to Asbury's family Church during this earlier period. In later years, after Francis had taken up the ministry, the parents were faithful Methodists. Asbury's autobiography tends to bear out the fact that he was not brought up in the Methodist Societies. It was at the age of fourteen that Asbury began to find the established church insufficient to satisfy his religious hunger. He says:

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[1] "Asbury," Dictionary of American Biography, ed. Allen Johnson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1928), I, 380.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 156.

[3] William C. Larrabee, Asbury and His Colaborers, I, 13.

> Soon after I entered on that business God sent a pious man, not a Methodist, into our neighborhood, and my mother invited him to our house; by his conversation and prayers I was awakened before I was fourteen years of age. It was now easy and pleasing to leave my company, and I began to pray morning and evening, being drawn by the cords of love, as with the bands of man. I soon left our blind priest, and went to West Bromwich Church; here I heard Ryland, Stillingfleet, Talbot, Bagnall, Mansfield, Haweis, and Venn, great names, and esteemed gospel ministers. I became very serious, reading a great deal—Whitefield and Cennick's Sermons, and every good book I could meet with. It was not long before I began to inquire of my mother who, where, what were the Methodists; she gave me a favorable account, and directed me to a person that could take me to Wednesbury to hear them.[2]

If Asbury's parents were Methodists during these early years of his life, as some biographers would lead us to believe, it would not have been necessary for Asbury to have inquired as to who, where, and what the Methodists were. It is more accurate to assume that Joseph and Elizabeth Asbury were of the Church of England until after the death of the infant daughter, at which time they became sympathetic toward the Methodist move-

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1. George G. Smith, Life and Labors of Francis Asbury, p. 2.

2. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 19, 1792).

ment and gradually with the encouragement of Francis entered into its fellowship.

Asbury received approximately seven years of schooling, beginning about the age of six or perhaps a little earlier, and continuing until his thirteenth year.[1] He credits his father with a deep interest in his remaining in school and as the one responsible for his entering the school of Auther Taylor, at Sneal's Green in the vicinity of Barr.[2] Francis says that he grew to hate the school and refers to his schoolmaster as "A great churl, and used to beat me cruelly."[3]

The result of this treatment was the removal of Asbury from this school and his return home for some months when he was about thirteen. For one year Francis was sent to earn his own living in the house of a Staffordshire gentleman of rank and means, but the father did not like the son's relationship with the ungodly master and terminated the boy's stay. Thus it was that at about the age of fourteen, Asbury was apprenticed to learn the business of "buckle chapes" at which he worked for about six and a half years.[4]

During this period Asbury enjoyed considerable liberty and spent much of his time studying Methodist theology and sermonic literature. Toward the end of his apprenticeship he became a regular attender of the class meetings, attending at first with his mother and then on his own. For some time he held meetings in his father's home and in his barn at which time he exhorted the people. Asbury had preached some months before publicly appearing in the Methodist Meetinghouse where the people were amazed at his ability and as he says, "not knowing how he had exercised elsewhere."[1]

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[1] "Francis Asbury," Encyclopedia Britannica (14th ed.), (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1937), II, 479.

[2] William Peter Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, p. 30.

[3] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 16, 1792), II, 158.

[4] "Francis Asbury," loc. cit., II, 497.

Thus it was at about the age of either eighteen or nineteen Asbury was licensed as a local preacher in the Methodist Society. He labored among the surrounding shires until the age of twenty-one when he went to London and was admitted to the Wesleyan Conference.

3. ITINERANT PREACHER IN ENGLAND

As has already been mentioned, Asbury began his preaching in an informal manner by speaking at class meetings and gatherings where there were people to listen. He began by reading the Scriptures at the meetings where his mother attended. The good sisters then thought Francis might venture a word of exhortation after the reading of the Word.[2] Mr. Mathers soon became inspired with confidence in Asbury and when Francis reached the age of seventeen Mr. Mathers gave him authority to form and lead a society-class at Bromwich Heath. Thus it was that Asbury comments, "Behold me now a local preacher."[3] Asbury immediately made himself available to every preacher. This led him to visiting Derbyshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and almost every place within reach. He would often preach as many as three to five times a week.[1]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 16, 1792), II, 159.

[2] Frederick W. Briggs, Bishop Asbury (London: Wesleyan Conference Office, 1879), p. 18.

[3] Asbury, op. cit., (July 16, 1792), II, 159.

After five years as local preacher Asbury, at the age of twenty-three or twenty-four gave himself to the full-time ministry. In 1766 he left his home and was assigned in charge of the Staffordshire and Gloucestershire areas. A year later Asbury went to London to the twenty-fourth Conference and was there regularly "admitted on trial" for the itinerant ministry and appointed to the Bedfordshire Circuit.[2] John Wesley makes no mention of the admission of Asbury on trial in his Journal entry concerning the Conference of 1767. He merely says:

> I met in Conference with our assistants and a select number of preachers. To these were added, on Thursday and Friday, Mr. Whitefield, Howell Harris, and many stewards and local preachers.[3]

It could be assumed that Asbury was among those listed as local preachers. In editorial comment Nehemiah Curnock notes that Francis Asbury was received on trial at this Conference.[4] In the following year Asbury was admitted into full relationship as an itinerant preacher and appointed to the Colchester parish.

At the 1768 Conference Wesley was deeply concerned with the extensive need for laborers in the American Mission. Just previous to the

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 16, 1792), II, 160.

[2] Briggs, Bishop Asbury, p. 23.

[3] John Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: Epworth Press, 1914), V, 227-228.

[4] Ibid., V, 228.

Conference Wesley had received an appeal from New York for additional missionaries.[1] Again Wesley fails to mention his relationship with the Conference either because of press of events or a failure to see the significance of Asbury.

In 1769 he was re-appointed to Bedfordshire; in 1770 he traveled in Wiltshire; and then in 1771 went to the Conference in Bristol. This, according to Briggs, was the first Conference which Asbury attended as a full itinerant minister.[2] Asbury makes no mention of this fact and it is certain that he was present at least at two other Conferences; the Conference of 1767 when admitted on trial, and in 1768 when admitted into full membership.

Asbury went to the Conference of August 7, 1771 with an inner urge to visit America. During the Conference it was proposed that some preachers should go to America, and Asbury writes, "I spoke my mind, and made an offer of myself. It was accepted by Mr. Wesley and others, who judged I had a call."[3]

Wesley remarks that they had more preachers at this Conference of 1771 than usual as a consequence of Mr. Shirley's circular letter. Wesley's Journal omits what in the History of Methodism appears of far more importance which was the appointment of Asbury as a missionary to America.[4] Francis Asbury, at this time, was not of sufficient importance to have signed with the fifty-three preachers the declaration drawn up by Wesley, in which Walter Shirley acknowledged he had mistaken the meaning of the Minutes.[1]

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[1] John Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, V, 282.

[2] Briggs, Bishop Asbury, p. 23.

[3] Asbury, Heart of Asbury's Journal, ed. Ezra S. Tipple, p. 1.

[4] Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, V, 425.

The affection with which Francis held his parents is reflected in the gentleness of manner with which he announced his acceptance of an appointment to America. Asbury left his home and visited his many friends in Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Gloucestershire.

Toward the end of August Asbury made his way back to Bristol, and with the donation of a supply of clothes and ten pounds he set sail on September 4, 1771 for America in the company of his fellow missionary, Richard Wright.

4. THE BACKGROUND OF THE PERIOD IN AMERICAN METHODISM FROM 1771 TO 1784

Francis Asbury arrived in Philadelphia on October 27, 1771 and was directed to the home of Mr. Francis Harris.[2] He and his fellow missionary were well received and that evening they went to hear their first Methodist preaching in the American colonies.

The American Methodism of 1771 into which Asbury entered numbered a little less than four hundred, chiefly in the neighborhood of New York and Philadelphia.[3] Among the four hundred Methodists ten were preachers, including Embury, Webb, Williams, King, Owen, and the missionaries Boardman,

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[1] Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, V, 427.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (October 27, 1771), I, 14.

[3] "Francis Asbury," Encyclopedia Britannica (14th ed.), II, 497.

Pilmoor, and Williams, sent two years previously by Wesley.[1] The American societies upon Asbury's arrival were under the supervision of Richard Boardman, and Asbury was assigned by him on November 12, 1771 to preach in New York.

The first Methodist had arrived in America from Ireland on the tenth of August, 1760. The party consisted of Philip Embury; his wife, Margaret Switzer; Peter Switzer and probably a brother of his wife; Paul Heck and his wife Barbara; Valor Tettler; Philip Morgan, and the Dulmage family. Philip Embury was a class leader and licensed local preacher in the Methodist Church of Ireland.[2]

In 1765 another vessel arrived in New York bringing additional emigrants, among them some of Embury's relatives. With the exception of Embury and a couple of others, these early settlers ceased their worship of God. It was only under the extreme urgings of Barbara Heck that Embury consented to organize a class meeting of American Methodists.[3] In 1768 this small group erected the first structure for the worship of Methodist followers in the Western hemisphere, and it was dedicated by Embury on October 30.

The first English missionary to arrive in America was Robert Williams in 1769. For six years Williams was a most effective pioneer in American Methodism, establishing a successful mission in Baltimore County and later in Petersbury, Virginia and in Norfolk, Virginia. The first time America appears in the list of Wesley's appointments is at the Leeds Conference on August 3, 1769 when Wesley appoints the first two missionaries to America. He writes in his Journal:

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[1] H. K. Carroll, The Francis Asbury Centenary Volume, p. 31.

[2] Ibid., p. 15-16.

[3] Carroll, op. cit., p. 17.

> On Thursday I mentioned the case of our brethren in New York who had built the first Methodist preaching house in America, and were in great want of money, but much more of preachers. Two of our preachers, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor, willingly offered themselves for the service; by whom was determined to send them fifty pounds, as a token of our brotherly love.[1]

Thus, in the Conference of 1770 the name America appears with a reported membership of three hundred and sixteen. At the next Conference Captain Webb, Pilmoor, and Boardman gave glowing reports to Wesley, and made an appeal for more ministers which Wesley could not resist. In answer to this call came the response of Richard Wright and Francis Asbury.

i. Life in the Colonies.

In order to evaluate the minister's task it is necessary to see him in his social setting and understand the parishioners with whom he works. Asbury's first assignment was to one of the larger cities of the American frontier, New York City. Its population at this time was about twenty-five thousand and embraced from Beekman Street on the north and the Battery on the South.[2] There were seventeen churches on the island of which the Reformed Dutch and Episcopal had three each, the Presbyterians had two, and the Seceders, Baptists, Jews, French Protestants, Moravians, and Methodists, one each.

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[1] Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, V, 331.

[2] W. P. Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, p. 91.

Francis Asbury was not content with city life as he called it. He felt more at home in the rural community and backwoods. Except for a few small cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Boston, the America of 1771 was still a frontier in which a log cabin chapel in Virginia was not out of place. The most thickly settled area was New Jersey, and Philadelphia was the most important city. Philadelphia had now been settled for nearly a hundred years and was the center for marketing and trading in the newly settled valleys of Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania. The colonies were still in the log cabin era. Two years before Asbury's arrival Robert Strawbridge had built a log cabin in Maryland.[1] The settlements now extended from Maine to Georgia, but they were sparsely populated and only recently had the pioneers passed over the mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee.

The status of America in 1783, at the time of the official announcement in America of the ratification of the Treaty of Independence, was that of a sparsely settled frontier country. Even France looked on America as a protege and regarded the average American not only as inferior but sadly lacking in the knowledge of the amenities of life.[2] The majority of the population was centered in small areas and the remainder of the 3,250,000 Americans were scattered from Georgia to New Hampshire.

Except for the tidewater regions the typical American was a pioneer, cultivating small farms. Because of their isolation, the frontiersmen developed a sense of self-confidence and social equality. All the men labored together, fought their common enemy and shared equally in the successes and dangers. The result was that a man was judged by what he was and what he could do.

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[1] Henry Kalloch Rowe, Modern Pathfinders of Christianity (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1928), p. 127.

[2] Asa Earl Martin, History of the United States, 1492-1865, Vol. 1, (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1934), p. 179.

The itinerant preacher fit into this picture for he was poor and often did not possess more than his horse with which to move over the frontier. The trails were rough and the wooded areas dangerous. Indians were a constant threat, and wars between the Indian and the whites were continuous. The pioneers were moving westward as rapidly as the Indian situation would permit. In 1771, after the defeat of the Regulators in the battle of Alamance, several hundred North Carolinians moved into the Watauga settlement and organized their own government.[1]

James Quinn relates accompanying Bishop Asbury on a ten day trip ono ne of his western tours. It was log cabin days, he says, and they were not such unsightly things, "If coon and wild-cat skins were hanging round the walls, and deer-horns strewed over the roof, and wild turkeys' wings sticking about in the cracks; for they were, with few exceptions, the best dwellings in the land.[2] These people were accustomed to the rough ways and morals of the frontier. The news of the church meeting was carried from clearing to clearing; it was a welcome social event to isolated folk, and the people left every task to throng to the service.[3]

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1. Martin, History of the United States, I, 202.

2. Wakeley, Heroes of Methodism, p. 35.

3. Rowe, Modern Pathfinders of Christianity, p. 131.

Many of the cabins were neat and clean but Quinn says:

> I must confess, however, that all were not so; for it was our sad lot to fall in with one or two that were miserably filthy, and fearfully infested with vermin.[1]

The colonial people were a rough people filled with courage and accustomed to toils, care and the anxieties of daily dangers. They were not, however, all ignorant and illiterate backwoodsmen, for some were learned who sought the adventure and fortune of the frontier.

ii. The Political Background.

The political environment in which a Church finds itself is often a strong determining factor in the future success or failure of a Christian Mission. Asbury arrived in America at a time of great transition in the political history of the colonies. The French and Indian War had left England more powerful than ever before in her history but with an awareness that her system of imperial government was most inadequate. The lack of cooperation on the part of the colonies throughout her scattered empire brought about a new policy of colonial control. Parliament resolved to unite its empire into a close political unity and extend its tax system to include all the colonies.

The psychology of the American people was not favorable to the successful execution of this policy. George Grenville, a premier of remarkable ability, visited the American colonies and was amazed to find the disregard in which English laws were held. The strict enforcement of the trade laws had a definite effect on the prosperity of the New England region. The Stamp Act of 1765 brought the final wave of protest that swept the country. As Martin suggests, it was not this specific tax to which they objected, "Their opposition was mainly to taxation as a principle."[1]

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[1] Wakeley, Heroes of Methodism, p. 36.

The Act was repealed by Parliament in 1766 but the harmony was of short duration. Again in 1769 Parliament passed a series of acts with the most objectionable being the Townshend Act. The Townshend Act levied an import tax on paint, lead, paper, glass, and tea. This Act brought an immediate protest from the Massachusetts Assembly. The tension grew until the royal governors were issued orders from Parliament to dissolve the assemblies of their provinces where circular letters were presented. Such action only intensified the situation and brought about conflict in the streets between townspeople and the British troops. In 1770 with the appointment of Lord North to succeed Townshend, the duties were repealed with the exception of a small tax on tea. The colonies in turn lifted their boycott on all items except that on tea.

The bitter controversy between England and the colonies had the result of seriously weakening the political and emotional ties. This situation was brought to a head when the East India Company, in an effort to relieve its financial strain, was successful in receiving a monopoly of the American trade in tea. Hence, America's lucrative trade in tea was threatened and the large new consignments of tea were faced with a well-coordinated plan to prevent is disposal. In Boston a mob of some fifty men dressed as Indians boarded one of the tea ships and threw the chests of tea overboard, an incident which became known as the "Tea party" of December 16, 1773.[2] Similar parties

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1. Martin, History of the United States, I, 147.

2. Ibid., I, 153.

were held throughout the colonies but none with as great a political significance.

In 1774 General Gage arrived in Massachusetts to assume the governorship and brought with him four regiments of troops. Such drastic enforcement that followed only antagonized the colonies and brought about a series of public meetings and rump sessions of adjourned assemblies. In September of 1774 the First Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia composed of delegates of all the colonies except Georgia. The Congress advised Massachusetts to continue to resist the acts of Parliament and sent the King a petition affirming their loyalty and asking for a redress of their grievances. The King refused these earnest solicitations and was upheld by the English voters in a general election.

The situation was growing steadily worse in Massachusetts and on receiving word that a considerable supply of military arms was being stored in Concord, General Gage dispatched a detachment of troops to seize the supplies. The news of this bloodshed in Massachusetts spread rapidly and militia companies were formed in all parts of New England. On May 10, 1775 the Second Continental Congress met in Philadelphia; by common consent it was vested with the powers of government, and began making immediate plans for military preparations.

Three years after Asbury landed in America the colonies were in political confusion. Rankin and his associates were soon responsible for bringing the Methodists under general suspicion as Loyalists, and Wesley, who felt little sympathy for the colonists, only added to the already tense situation.

Thomas Rankin, who had newly arrived from England to assume the

Superintendency of the American Methodist Church, never fully understood the colonial attitude toward the mother country. He was continually giving offense and finally caused Wesley to request Asbury's return to England. Political fate decreed otherwise. At that moment the Continental Congress was meeting in Philadelphia and by the time of the battle of Lexington all the Methodist ministers had returned to England with the exception of Asbury.[1] Asbury had decided that it was God's will that he remain and cast his fortunes with the colonists.

The opposition experienced by many of the Methodists during the Revolution encouraged their seeking new homes on the western frontier. Asbury, himself, on refusing to take the oath of allegiance in Maryland, was forced to take refuge in Delaware where he remained for the space of twenty months.[2]

With the British acknowledgment of American independence, Wesley found himself dealing with a new situation. He therefore resolved in 1784 to send Rev. Thomas Coke, a presbyter of the Church of England, with instructions to act with Asbury as the joint superintendents of the Methodist Societies in America. Coke and Asbury met for the first time in Barrett's Chapel in Kent County, Delaware and after extended conferences decided to call a General Conference of all the preachers.

5. APPOINTMENT OF ASBURY AS SUPERINTENDENT

Asbury was just twenty-seven when he received a letter from Wesley

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1. Rowe, Modern Pathfinders of Christianity, p. 127-128.

2. Strickland, The Pioneer Bishop, pp. 115-116.

promoting him to General Assistant of the work in America. On receiving this letter of October 10, 1772 he writes, "I received a letter from Mr. Wesley, in which he required a strict attention to discipline and appointed me to act as assistant."[1] This appointment did not come as a surprise to Asbury. It is possible that Asbury was expecting the appointment, not from words previously written by Wesley, but from an awareness that Wesley knew the general conditions existing in the Methodist Church in America. As DuBose has pointed out, "Boardman lacked the qualities which his young colaborer possessed."[2] Boardman was content to permit his ministers to remain within the cities, often two or three laboring together as associates at the same preaching place. This was Asbury's own experience upon arriving in New York where he assisted Boardman and Captain Webb. Asbury felt such waste of labor was not in the Methodist plan.

Near the end of October Asbury met with Boardman at Princeton college and came to an agreement about the affairs of the society.[3] Boardman seemed to accept Asbury's appointment without a sense of resentment. His behaviour reflects credit to himself and Asbury's diplomacy.

Asbury was a strict disciplinarian but had his difficulties in discharging the duties of superintendent. He felt it necessary to maintain the standards set by Wesley but found the American societies lax in

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 45-46.

2. DuBose, Francis Asbury (October 10, 1772), p. 54.

3. Asbury, op. cit., (October 19, 1772), I, 47.

discipline and not willing to accept such rigid rules. Methodism in America at this time was yet considered a society within the Anglican Church. The administration of the Lord's Supper and Baptism to the Methodist people by the Anglican ministers was a constant trial to Asbury because the Anglican clergy were so few and were not morally approved by the Methodists. The local preachers put pressure on Asbury for the rights to administer the sacraments.

i. Superseded by Thomas Rankin.

At the Wesleyan Conference of 1772 Mr. Wesley proposed to Mr. Thomas Rankin that he go to America to become the general superintendent. Mr. Rankin accepted this appointment and arrived in Philadelphia in June, 1773.[1]

The appointment of Rankin, Asbury's senior in years, was in strict harmony with Methodist practice which placed the eldest preacher in charge. This, however, had not always been followed as in Asbury's own instance when he succeeded Boardman, an elder in both years and experience.

Asbury notes Rankin's arrival in his Journal. He does not, however, infer that Rankin's coming had effected his status in any way. His words, "To my great comfort arrived Mr. Rankin," would imply that Asbury was happy to see Rankin.[2] The first impression of this new missionary was that the man would not be admired as a preacher but should be able to fill his place as a disciplinarian.[1]

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[1] Larrabee, Asbury and His Colaborers, p. 25.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (June 3, 1773), I, 75.

Wesley recognized Rankin as a distinguished disciplinarian possessing the traits necessary for leadership. Rankin proved the truth of this faith early in his American ministry by settling many of the difficulties which had been vexing to the society.

Mr. Rankin and Asbury soon found themselves incompatible in many of their views and opinions. What Rankin saw of the revival activity in the New York Society was not pleasing to him, nor was Asbury ever a good subordinate. The conflict of views caused an unpleasant state of feelings to spring up between Asbury and Rankin, and the latter communicated these feelings to Wesley.

ii. His Refusal to Return to England.

Rankin's communications to Wesley undoubtedly influenced Wesley unfavorably in his opinion toward Mr. Asbury. Wesley, through Rankin's letters, came to suspect Asbury of insubordination. This led to Wesley's summoning Asbury home to England on March 1, 1775.[2] Wesley made a second request for Asbury's return to England in his letter of April 21. A month later on May 19 Wesley again writes to Rankin, in what appears to have been a response to a letter written him by Rankin, in which he has expressed the belief that Asbury will be returning to England before the next Conference. In his letter to Rankin Wesley writes, "I doubt not but brother Asbury and you will part friends: I shall hope to see him at the

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (June 3, 1773), I, 75.

[2] John Wesley, The Works of the Rev. John Wesley (New York: Carlton and Phillips, 1853), pp. 7-8.

Conference. He is quite an upright man. I apprehend he will go through his work more cheerfully when he is within a little distance from me."[1] By August Wesley concludes that Asbury had seen fit to ignore his request that he return to England, and writes Rankin expressing his regret that it was necessary that Asbury remain with him for another year.[2]

It is impossible to gather Asbury's complete attitude toward the request of Wesley that he return to England. The very fact that he did not honor the transfer is evidence that he was receiving his orders only from a higher power and his inner guidance. His entry of March 12, 1775 suggests this course of action. It is not certain whether Asbury is referring directly to Wesley's suggestion for his return, which he sent by way of Rankin, or if Asbury is concerned with the more general conflict which was going on between Rankin and himself. Asbury summarizes his attitude in his sentence, "But all these matters I can silently commit to God, who overrules both in earth and heaven."[3]

During the early years of Asbury's work in America he seems to have held a desire to return to England. This desire alternated between the decision to return and a feeling that it would not be in God's will that he return. On October 7, 1772 Asbury writes to his mother and father refusing to return home at their request and feeling that it was not in the will of God.[4] On September 5, 1773 he writes his parents from

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1. John Wesley, The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, p. 9.

2. Ibid., p. 11.

3. Asbury, Asbury's Journals, I, 147.

4. Francis Asbury, "Incomplete notes on Asbury's Journal," (Letter of October 7, 1772).

Baltimore saying that unless he takes a trip to the West Indies he should be in England in less than two years.[1]

About the time Wesley was writing Rankin conceding that Asbury would be remaining in America for another year, Asbury was receiving a letter from Thomas Rankin informing him that Mr. Redda, Mr. Dempster and Rankin had consulted and deliberately concluded that it would be best for the Methodist missionaries to return to England. To this Asbury responded:

> But I can by no means agree to leave such a field for gathering souls to Christ as we have in America. It would be an eternal dishonor to the Methodists that we should all leave three thousand souls who desire to commit themselves to our care. Neither is it the part of a good shepherd to leave his flock in time of danger; therefore I am determined, by the grace of God, not to leave them, let the consequence be what it may. Our friends here appeared to be distressed above measure at the thoughts of being forsaken by the preachers. So I wrote my sentiments both to Mr. Thomas Rankin and Mr. George Shadford.[2]

His letter evidently caused some postponement in the ministers' return for some two years passed before they actually left for England. On September 22, 1777 George Shadford informs Asbury that his brethren had sailed for England. Asbury dismisses his fellow ministers with these words:

> I met with Brother George Shadford, who informed me that my brethren, Mr. Rankin and Mr. Rodds, had left the continent. So we are left alone. But I leave myself in the hand of God; relying on his good providence to direct and protect us; persuaded that nothing will befall me, but what shall conduce to his glory and my benefit.[3]

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[1] Francis Asbury, "Incomplete notes on Asbury's Journal," (Letter of September 5, 1773).

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (August 7, 1775), I, 159-160.

[3] Ibid., I, 257.

Exactly what Asbury meant by these closing words, "What shall conduce to his glory and my benefit," will never be known, but one can be certain that Asbury was aware that life for him would be much easier now that Rankin had returned to England. In many ways Asbury's troubles had just begun and distressing times were still ahead.

Asbury continued about his business until he was required to take an oath of allegiance to the state of Maryland. On the same day that Asbury was approached by officers of the State of Maryland demanding that he take an oath of allegiance, his two fellow ministers, Samuel Spragg and George Shadford, left for England. As a minister and Englishman Asbury declined to sign the oath and take up arms against England. He says, "I am considered by some as an enemy of the country, every day liable to be seized by violence and abused."[1]

Within a week Asbury crossed over the line into Delaware where no state oath was required of clergymen. He considered himself, in a sense, a prisoner and restricted in his movements. He remained in the home of his old friend Judge Thomas White until the troubles were passed. Asbury found it difficult to be content under these restricted circumstances. It all seemed such a waste of time to him. On May 4, 1779 he complains about himself, "My conscience smote me severely for lying in bed till six o'clock this morning, no indisposition of body being the cause. O, why should we lose one hour, when time is so short and precious, and so many things to be learned and taught."[2]

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (March 13, 1778), I, 268.

2. Ibid., I, 309-310.

In the months that followed Asbury assumed more and more control of American Methodism. He was the guiding light in the controversy over whether Methodists should still consider themselves as a part of the Episcopal Church. The few Episcopal ministers in this country and the scattered Episcopal churches made the problem even more pressing. The spirit of division was growing, and the Methodist ministers were beginning to ask why they did not have the authority to administer the ordinances as well as preach the gospel, when the Treaty of Paris brought the war to a close on September 3, 1783.

iii. Election as Bishop at the Christmas Conference.

On hearing that the war was over, Asbury immediately took action to unite the scattered societies of American Methodism. Tipple enlarges upon Asbury's entry of August 25, 1783 and says:

> Asbury had not been in New York now for several years. He was in North Carolina in April when he learned that peace had been established between England and America, and at once persuaded Dickins to go to New York to take charge of the work there which during the war had of necessity been neglected.[1]

Asbury, however, did not assume the role of superintendent. He could have been looked upon more as a respected pastor among his brother ministers. Asbury felt it wise to follow the English plan where there would be gatherings of Methodist persons into societies, but dependent upon the Episcopal Church for the Sacrament and Baptism. The American Methodists were not satisfied with this arrangement.

The preachers in Virginia were showing indications of dissatisfaction with the situation. The northern preachers, meeting in Conference in 1779, sent a letter to the south urging the postponement of the threatened division. The letter had little effect and at the close of the Virginia Conference a committee was appointed which proceeded to ordain the preachers. Larrabee concedes that in the Conference to follow Methodism would have divided if it had not been for the "admirable wisdom, consummate prudence, reliable firmness, mild forbearance, and conciliating temper of Asbury."[1]

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[1] Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, p. 218.

In January, 1784 Asbury received a letter from Mr. Wesley, in which he was again directed to act as general assistant in America and to receive no preachers from Europe who were not recommended by Wesley, nor any in America who would not submit to Asbury.[2] The American concern continued to weigh upon Wesley's mind until August 31, 1784 when he called Dr. Coke, Mr. Whatcoat, and Mr. Vassey to London in order that they might embark for America.[3] It was now clear in Wesley's mind what it was necessary for him to do for the American society. On September 1 he ordained Whatcoat and Vassey, and the following day, assisted by other ordained ministers, ordained Dr. Coke as a Superintendent.[4] In a letter addressed to Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America, Wesley announces his appointment of Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury as joint Superintendents over the brethren in North America.[5]

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1. Larrabee, Asbury and His Colaborers, p. 50.
2. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 469.
3. Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, VII, 15.
4. Ibid., VII, 15.
5. Wesley, The Works of Rev. John Wesley, VIII, 251.

On November 1, 1784 Asbury met with Dr. Coke and Richard Whatcoat at Barrett's Chapel. Asbury was shocked when informed of the intent of these brethren. Asbury refused to accept his appointment by Wesley but said he would act in this capacity if so chosen by his fellow preachers. He insisted on the popular rights of the ministers. He favored the right of the Conference to elect its own superintendents.

The design to organize the Methodists into an Independent Episcopal Church met with favor with the preachers present on this occasion and it was agreed that the ensuing Christmas would be the time, and Baltimore would be the place for the holding of a General Conference.[1]

Asbury rode to Baltimore on December 4 and met Dr. Coke at Abingdon on December 14. On the twenty-fourth day of December, 1784 the Conference was seated in Baltimore and formed itself into the Methodist Episcopal Church. Asbury, in writing of the events of the Conference, says, "When the Conference was seated Dr. Coke and myself were unamiously elected to the superintendency of the Church, and my ordination followed."[2] On the twenty-fifth day of December, 1784 Asbury was ordained deacon, and the two ensuing days, was ordained elder and superintendent. Asbury had now, by virtue of his own intrinsic merit, and the providence of God, risen in thirteen years from a stranger on the American frontier to the highest office of the newly formed Methodist Episcopal Church of America.

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (November 14, 1784), I, 484.

2. Ibid., (December 18, 1784), I, 486-487.

CHAPTER III

SOME OF THE FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCED ASBURY'S PERSONALITY

1. HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD THE SUPERINTENDENCY

Francis Asbury's attitude toward the superintendency of the Methodist Church is best represented in his incessant labors and superior administration. He expressed his feelings early in his American ministry when he wrote, "I think I shall show them the way."[1] Asbury, on his appointment as assistant superintendent and later as Bishop, followed the examples of neither Boardman, his predecessor, nor Rankin, his successor, in the assistant superintendency. His example was Wesley who alone was his superior worker and organizer.[2]

Asbury believed that one could best lead through one's own example. When Wesley directed Asbury to assume the position as assistant superintendent, Asbury immediately started south preaching as he went and organizing circuits.[3] His administrative task became a part of his preaching ministry. It was never necessary for Asbury to ask one of his ministers to undertake a mission which he had not already experienced.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (November 22, 1771), I, 17.

[2] "Asbury," The New International Encyclopedia, 2nd edition. (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1925), II, 222.

[3] Ezra S. Tipple, Freeborn Garrettson (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1910), pp. 40-41.

He possessed some of the natural qualities of leadership. This fact was recognized by Wesley in appointing him to succeed Boardman, Asbury's superior in both age and experience. The colonial preachers and lay leaders considered Asbury, if not their superior, then their leader among leaders. His ability was further recognized in the Christmas conference of 1784 when he was elevated to "bishop" by popular vote. It must be acknowledged that the vote was preceded by his appointment by Wesley, but such designation did not insure his election.

Shortly after his election as superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, Asbury assumed the title of bishop. He recognized his election as that of superintendent in his entry of December 24, 1784. His first mention of the title of bishop is by an indirect reference on September 10, 1786 when he wrote:

> I feel the worth of souls, and the weight of the pastoral charge, and that the conscientious discharge of its important duties requires something more than human learning, unwiedly salaries, or clerical titles of D.D., or even bishops.[1]

Tipple notes the use of the title of bishop in the address to the President of the United States in 1789, "We, the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church."[2] The title was first used in the conference minutes in 1787.[3] Dr. Coke, according to Tipple's account referred to himself as superintendent as late as May 6, 1787.[4] This does not preclude the possibility that both titles might have been in use at this time by Asbury and Coke. Asbury's Journal increases the difficulty of establishing the use of the term "bishop" by Asbury's own constant reference to Coke as Dr. Coke, rather than the using of his ecclesiastical titles of Reverend or Superintendent. Some have claimed that Asbury assumed the title of bishop from the outset and was always referred to as "Bishop." This fact is difficult to establish. It is certain that Wesley objected strenuously to this title from the beginning of its usage.[1]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 517.

[2] Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, p. 280.

[3] "Asbury," Collier's Encyclopedia, Charles P. Barry, editor. (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1952), I, 314.

[4] Tipple, op. cit., p. 255.

Asbury considered himself as the Bishop of American Methodism. At the time of his election he was placed in charge of the American field and Coke was assigned the area of Methodist Missions. As far as Asbury was concerned, he was the senior bishop of the American Church. There were periods when Asbury lamented the burden of his office, but as long as he lived he considered himself superior to his fellow bishops with the exception of Dr. Coke. Tipple mentions that at the conference of 1800 Asbury requested to resign his office as Bishop but was refused by the General Conference.[2] In the months that followed Bishops Whatcoat and Asbury traveled together carrying on the work of administering the Church.

At the General Conference of 1808 William McKendree was elected and ordained bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church.[3] Asbury appears more willing to share the burden of his office with this fourth bishop. He says, "The burden is now borne by two pair of shoulders instead of one; the care

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1. "Asbury," Encyclopedia Britannica (14th ed.), II, 497.

2. Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, p. 469.

3. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (May 6, 1808), III, 280.

is cast upon two hearts and heads."[1] The thought of seniority was, however, never sacrificed and though the conference elected McKendree an "Associate Bishop," Asbury considered him as his "Assistant."

Asbury was always conscious of his appointed task. In 1803 upon visiting Tennessee he noted the thousands of emigrants who were making the annual trip from east to west and says, "We must take care to send preachers after these people."[2] The same sense of responsibility was felt in the administration of discipline. In Asbury's earlier years Wesley was constantly encouraging him to maintain discipline.

It was not long before Asbury had received a reputation as a strict disciplinarian. Rowe refers to Asbury as the arbitrary dictator unwilling to accept the suggestions of others.[3] He was a master strategist who stayed in the front lines of battle. He would listen to the requests of his preachers and then appoint them where he thought they were best suited to carry on the work of God. There were loud complaints and at times his autocratic power was challenged. Asbury responded to the complaints of O'Kelly concerning Asbury's use of power:

> Power! Power! there is not a vote given in Conference in which the presiding elder has not greatly the advantage of me. All the influence I am to gain over a company of young men in a district must be done in three weeks; the greater part of them, perhaps, are seen by me only at Conference, while the presiding elder has had them with him all the year, and has the greatest opportunity of gaining influence.[4]

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (May 6, 1808), III, 280.

2. Ibid., (October 14, 1803), III, 132.

3. Henry Kalloch Rowe, Modern Pathfinders of Christianity, 133.

4. Asbury, op. cit., (January 12, 1790), II, 69.

Asbury never was a good follower. Less than a week after his arrival in New York he started off without asking permission of Boardman to preach in the villages of Westchester County.[1] It was not long after surrendering his authority to Thomas Rankin in 1773 that Asbury found himself out of sympathy with his superior. He and Rankin could never agree on colonial Church policy nor on the attitude of the colonies toward the mother country. Asbury by the nature of his personality was destined to lead. He believed with firm conviction that the office he attained was by divine appointment. His personality, coupled with his divine appointment and a will to work, was all that was necessary to elevate the office of Superintendent to the role of Bishop.

2. THE EFFECT OF EXTENDED POOR HEALTH

A less courageous man than Asbury would have seen fit to have retired from the active ministry at an early age because of poor health. His physical condition, though an inconvenience, did not often stop him in his labors.

His illness began shortly after his arrival in America. On his first trip into Westchester County he took ill with a cold and fever which grew worse until he finally collapsed and had to take to his bed for a period of three weeks.[2] This original illness did not continue throughout his life, but was followed by a variety of ailments. Asbury was never what

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1. "Asbury," Dictionary of American Biography, I, 381.

2. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (February 5, 1772), I, pp. 23-24.

one would call well. His incessant traveling over rugged roads and through both rain and swollen rivers speedily wore down his resistence. His ailments were undoubtedly often aggravated by his injudicious treatment. Blood-letting and blistering were his favorite remedies for all sorts of complaints, be it a boil, a skin-disease, or an intestinal disorder.[1] The conditions under which he found it necessary to live only aggravated what might have been a simple ailment. He often ate bad food which was poorly cooked. The frontier cabins lacked the ordinary sanitation necessary to hygienic living. He had no place he could call his home, except when sheer exhaustion or complete collapse forced him to a sick-bed.

He does not ponder on the state of his health but through casual references reveals the struggle with which he forced himself from one appointment to the next. On May 26, 1772 Asbury writes:

> Found myself very unwell in the morning; but visited a prisoner under sentence of death, and strove much to fasten conviction on his heart.[2]

On other occasions he writes:

> Set off in the stage for Bristol and crossed the water to see a man suspected of murder; but found him very ignorant of things relating to his soul: I then returned to Philadelphia very unwell.[3]

> The morning was very damp, and I imprudently set out an hour before day; I thus increased the cold I had caught in Alexandria, and brought on a regular attack of my old complaint--an inflammation in the throat. The day was very cold, and we suffered much; we stopped at a very indifferent house, where there were no beds fit for use, and no candles; we had to wait

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[1] "Asbury," Dictionary of American Biography, I, 382.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 31.

[3] Ibid., (June 11, 1772), I, 33.

> about two hours for some boiled milk. My fever and inflammation increasing I rode on thirty-three miles, to Collin's, in Caroline Country, where I became indisposed indeed.[1]

> Came to Baltimore; passed the guard against the plague in Philadelphia, set to prudence, one hundred miles off. O, the plague of sin! Would to God we were more guarded against its baleful influence! I was sick, weary, and feeble; yet, preaching being appointed for me in town.[2]

Asbury's sense of responsibility kept driving him on and on, until sheer exhaustion or illness forced him to stop. It would only be conjecture to say that Asbury was hampered by continued illness. The fact remains that from time to time he was forced to remain in bed because of illness. Yet to the very end when his body was racked with a consumptive cough he kept to the road and died in the active ministry in Virginia on Sunday, March 31, 1816.[3]

3. THE ADJUSTMENT TO CELIBACY

It could be said that Francis Asbury was married to the Methodist Church. The rapid growth of this infant Church can be credited in a large measure to Asbury's ability to give it his undivided attention. There have been some who have tried to give their own explanations for Asbury's life of celibacy.

i. The "Mother Attachment" Theory.

In the Dictionary of American Biography it is suggested that Asbury may have developed a mother-love which inhibited him from expressing his normal inclinations toward the opposite sex. In support of this theory it points to Asbury's early home life. It says, "Francis grew up under the sheltering care of the emotional woman and developed a mother-love which seems to have inhibited, with one possible exception, every normal inclination toward the other sex."[1]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (November 17, 1785), I, 502.

[2] Ibid., (October 10, 1793), II, 209.

[3] Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, p. 707.

This argument cannot be completely disproven. It tends to fall through a lack of evidence. A young man unwholesomely devoted to his mother would not have left her in his early twenties for a remote mission.

There is a strong suggestion that the early attachment to the young woman in England had a lasting effect on Asbury's memory. It is thought that his mother did not look with favor upon the woman. This disappointment may have made it easier for him to escape into the new world and leave romance behind.[2] This early romantic rift did not fully heal, for Asbury mentions it in a letter to his parents on June 7, 1784. He wrote, "Many things have inclined me to continue as yet in a single state. One, what once befell me in England."[3] If the choice were to be made between the "Mother Attachment" and the desire to escape from a disappointment in romance, the weight of evidence would be in favor of the latter.

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1. "Francis Asbury," Dictionary of American Biography, I, 380.

2. Ibid., I, 380.

3. Francis Asbury, "Incomplete Notes on Asbury's Journal," (Letter to parents from Prince Georges Country, Maryland, June 7, 1784).

ii. Asbury's Explanation and Attitude.

Asbury did not reject marriage but felt it would have been out of place in his own life. He speaks with humor about marriage in his letter to his parents which was previously mentioned. He says, "Tis true if I were to marry a wife with a fortune, or was less liberal, I might have more money."[1]

The effect of marriage on the number of available preachers to supply the ever increasing number of Methodist circuits tended to turn Asbury against marriage. Some of this negative attitude is expressed in his letter to William Duke:

> My Dear Billy, if you have not had orders from Rankin . . . Stand at all possible distance from the female sex that you be not betrayed by them that will damage the young mind and sink the aspiring soul and blast the prospect of the future man.[2]

The omission of all details surrounding this piece of advice prevents the direct application of this attitude toward his feeling concerning marriage. There is found in the statement, however, the attitude reflected in other areas of the Journal. Asbury's strongest rejection of marriage is to be found in his response to the letter from Dr. Coke announcing his marriage. Asbury writes on July 9, 1805:

> I received a letter from Dr. Coke, announcing to me his marriage; and advising me that he did not intend to visit America again as a visitor, but rather as a sojourner, if at all, could work be appointed him to do. Marriage is honorable in all, but to me it is a ceremony aweful as death. Well may it be so, when I calculate we have lost the traveling

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[1] Francis Asbury, "Incomplete Notes on Asbury's Journal," (Letter of June 7, 1784 to his parents).

[2] Ibid., (Letter of March 4, 1774 to William Duke).

> labors of two hundred of the best men in America, or the world, by marriage and consequent location.[1]

This spirit of bitterness was the result of accumulated losses to the traveling ministry through the locating of young married ministers. On April 25, 1792 he writes, "The spirit of matrimony is very prevalent here. In one circuit both preachers are settled."[2]

In June of 1780 Asbury gave consideration to the building of houses in every circuit for preachers' wives. He believed that if he could supply the preachers' wives with homes and the societies supply them with food, it might be possible for the preachers to continue to travel as they did when they were single.[3]

This attitude continued to grow until by the conference of 1804 Asbury was beginning to show some inclination to the preference of the receiving of married ministers on trial. At the Baltimore Conference held in Alexandria, D. C. in 1804, Samuel Monnet made application to be received on trial. "One of the preachers said, 'He is married.' Mr. Asbury replied, 'What of that? Perhaps he is the better for it. Better take preachers well married than be at the trouble of marrying them after you get them.'"[4]

Out of all the explanations as to why Asbury never married, Asbury gives what would appear to be the best reason for his own celibacy:

> If I should die in celibacy, which I think quite probable, I give the following reasons for what can scarcely be called

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, III, pp. 195-196.

2. Ibid., II, 149.

3. Ibid., (June 8, 1780), I, 375.

4. J. B. Wakeley, Heroes of Methodism, pp. 48-49.

> my choice: I was called in my fourteenth year. I began my public exercises between sixteen and seventeen; at twenty-one I traveled; at twenty-six I came to America: thus far I had reasons enough for a single life. It had been my intention of returning to Europe at thirty years of age, but the war continued, and it was ten years before we had a settled, lasting peace. This was no time to marry or be given in marriage. At forty-nine I was ordained superintendent bishop in America. Among the duties imposed upon me by my office was that of traveling extensively, and I could hardly expect to find a woman with grace enough to enable her to live but one week out of the fifty-two with her husband. Besides, what right has any man to take advantage of the affections of a woman, make her his wife, and by a voluntary absence subvert the whole order and economy of the marriage state, by separating those whom neither God, nature, nor the requirements of civil society permit to be put asunder? It is neither just nor generous. I may add to this, that I had little money, and with this little administered to the necessities of a beloved mother until I was fifty-seven. If I have done wrong, I hope God and the sex will forgive me. It is my duty now to bestow the pittance I may have to spare upon the widows and fatherless girls, and poor married men.[1]

In his letter to his parents on June 7, 1784 he says, "I have a spirit that cannot easily bend to be dependent upon anyone . . . It would bring additional trouble on me that have enough . . . ."[2]

Thus it would seem that Asbury has summarized his own marital status. He knew his own limitations and the demands of the cause to which he was dedicated and in consideration of both considered it unwise to marry.

4. THE NATURE OF FRONTIER SOCIETY

It is impossible to say whether an individual molds his environment or the environment makes the individual. Asbury faced a period in which the westward movement had already made its influence. The developed coastal regions were in control of established settlers and the vast untilled areas of the west were attracting young men. The task of Asbury was greatly increased by the pioneer methods. The westward movement was not a continuing clearing of land and building of roads. The pioneers were overleaping great spaces and establishing settlements wholly out of contact with their former life.[1] Thus, hundreds of miles of wilderness often separated the old and new settlements.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (January 27, 1804), III, 143.

[2] Francis Asbury, "Incomplete Notes on Asbury's Journal," June 7, 1784.

Asbury often met former parishioners on the frontier who opened their cabins for worship. Many greeted him with a smile of welcome. The Bishop always made himself pleasant and cheerful so that the families soon forgot their embarrassment, having entertained him under more favorable conditions.[2] The lodgings were not always the best. It is related that on many a night he could not get to sleep. On at least one night he warned the family, "Keep your cabins clean, for your health's sake and for your soul's sake, for there is no religion in dirt, and filth, and fleas."[3]

Asbury found his way into the most obscure parts of the country such as Kanawha, which was then wilderness. He told Rev. Thomas S. Hinde that, "The shepherd ought to know the flock, and the flock the shepherd."[4]

At the end of the Revolutionary War Kentucky and Tennessee were like wedges driven into Indian territory. The result was frequent Indian

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1. Asa Earl Martin, History of the United States, I, 200.

2. Wakeley, Heroes of Methodism, p. 35.

3. Ibid., p. 37.

4. Ibid., p. 39.

raids. Asbury mentions some of his frontier experiences of 1790. On July 18 he comes to a village where a boy is killed by a bear.[1] On July 19 he rode to Drinnon's "whose wife was killed, and his son taken prisoner by the Indians."[2]

Such experiences hardened and prepared him for his life of constant danger. His commanding personality is revealed in his account of May 24, 1790:

> We set out on our return through the wilderness with a large and helpless company; we had about fifty people, twenty of whom were armed, and five of whom might have stood fire. To preserve order and harmony, we had articles drawn up for, and signed by, our company, and I arranged the people for traveling according to the regulations agreed upon. Some disaffected gentlemen, who would neither sign nor come under discipline, had yet the impudence to murmur when left behind. The first night we lodged some miles behind the Hazel patch. The next day we discovered signs of Indians, and some thought they heard voices; we therefore thought it best to travel on, and did not encamp until three o'clock, halting on the east side of Cumberland River.[3]

The frontiersmen, because of their isolation, developed into rugged individualists. Most of the frontier regions lacked the presence of a church and a minister who ministered to the requirements of the people in the East. Every gathering of frontiersmen, whether it was for a marriage, a funeral, or a religious meeting, dissolved into a neighborhood festivity. In the pioneer region these were full of excitement and met the need of their loneliness. Martin says, "The Methodists . . . with their stress upon the power of exhortation . . . appealed to the frontiersmen."[1]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 91.

[2] Ibid., II, 130.

[3] Ibid., II, 85.

Many of the qualities of personality seen in Asbury which would seem objectionable today were but reflections of the frontier society in which he lived. He was a part of the frontier and had to meet the frontier with the same strength and individualism with which the frontier met him.

The society to which he ministered was a scattered society. This meant to him long hours in the saddle. In his later years, in areas where conditions permitted, he rode a carriage. In saddle or carriage the hardships were still the same. There were streams to be forded and rough roads to travel. On numerous occasions he suffered injury when his carriage upset.

These were the experiences and the rough frontier which moulded the personality of Francis Asbury. A man of less courage and dedication would have been unable to have met the challenge of an unconquered frontier. Asbury literally planted Methodism in the wilderness. A surprisingly large number of the organizers and leaders of the new democracy were members of the Presbyterian Church. By the close of the seventeenth century Methodism was a close second to the Presbyterians in numbers and influence.[2] Asbury was always anxious to keep this primitive Methodist simplicity which held a special appeal to the frontiersmen.

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[1] Martin, History of the United States, I, 357.

[2] Ibid., I, 357.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORICAL TRANSITIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF PASTORAL PSYCHOLOGY

Francis Asbury's forty-five years of pastoral ministry on the American continent permitted him to witness a transition in the pastoral ministry in the coastal areas but inland, the Methodist preacher of 1816 was as much of a frontier pastor as was Asbury during his first year in America. As the frontier gradually moved back, there was a movement of the settlers from the coastal regions into the newly won areas reproducing much of the life that was formerly to have been found in the older coastal settlements.

1. IN THE PREACHING OFFICE

The increasing experience of the frontier pastor brought a gradual change in his pastoral emphasis. The success of the camp meeting encouraged its rapid growth and promotion by both the clergy and laity. It was city preaching which never played any prominent role among the Methodist ministry in Asbury's time. Asbury did not encourage city preaching. There was in addition to this a minimum of urban preaching because of the rural nature of the Methodist Church.

In the growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church at the turn of the nineteenth century, it should be noted that the camp meeting was a new development on the frontier. In the local church the prayer meeting was slowly beginning to grow in both numbers and influence. The class meeting was not suddenly replaced but continued to play a less dominant role. The more established customs continued and the newer methods went through a period of integration.

i. Frontier Preaching.

There can be little doubt that in the mind of the frontier clergy preaching was the prime function of his pastoral office. The frontier Methodist clergy were men of high moral character. There were few, if any, college educated clergy among their fellowship, but they preached with a sincerity filled with an emotional zeal which captured the attention of their audience. The Methodist preacher sounded a personal note. His message was not phrased to soothe the ears of his hearers. He was interested in stirring their conscience. Harris says, "Personal salvation was the keynote of religion."[1] The latter part of the eighteenth century marked a gradual breaking away from some of the Puritan theology. The authority of the Bible continued to be recognized by all. Whatever the preacher could prove from chapter and verse was accepted as final. It could be said that reverence for the Bible was so profound that it was a religion in itself.

The frontier sermon was not eloquent but was delivered with authority and gravity. Sermon preparation was often limited to the many hours on the trail. During the last two weeks of August, 1783 Asbury reports having ridden two hundred miles crossing the mountains on foot and preaching seventeen times in the woods and cabins of the widely scattered inhabitants.[1] His limited remarks on the subject in the Journal do not mention the type nor variety of sermons he preached. It could be assumed that the sermons did not vary much in their general outline but were altered by illustrations taken from intervening experiences.

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[1] George Harris, A Century's Change in Religion (New York: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1914), p. 6.

The emphasis of this period was on the power of exhortation. Preaching from a manuscript was frowned upon by the clergy and laity alike. It was the loud and emotional presentation that appealed to the frontiersmen. Martin, a secular historian, writes:

> With the passing of time both denominations (Baptist and Methodist) gained steadily in numbers over the more conservative Presbyterians, who insisted on a learned clergy and a religion with a pronounced intellectual bias. As the Methodists and Baptists laid stress upon the power of exhortation, they were able to find a large number of preachers whose inclinations and habits appealed to the frontiersmen.[2]

The Methodist clergy were not highly educated. They did not deliver a nicely adjusted systematic sermon. They did, however, understand the frontiersman and spoke a language which he understood and appreciated. The preacher spoke to congregations small in number assembled in a cabin, or a frontier store; he also spoke at large gatherings numbering in the thousands.

Asbury writes of both experiences. On August 27, 1784 he says, "My first discourse was for the benefit of poor stragglers, who have not yet returned to the fold."[3] An illustration from a few months later

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 463.

2. Martin, History of the United States, I, 357.

3. Asbury, op. cit., I, 480-481.

is perhaps even more specific, "I preached to a few serious women at one o'clock."[1] On other occasions his congregation would number into the thousands. On March 20, 1785 he writes, "The bell went round to give notice, and I preached to a large congregation."[2] Strickland records a letter of 1769 written by Pilmoor to Wesley in which he commends on field preaching in America. "Sunday evening I went out upon the Common. I had the stage appointed for the horse-race for my pulpit, and I think between four and five thousand people, who heard with an attention still as night."[3]

During the lifetime of Asbury there was not a great change in the preaching habits. The preacher continued to preach the same gospel and to a similar people. There was introduced at the turn of the nineteenth century a new medium of reaching the scattered frontier people and holding them in a spiritual environment over an extended period of time. This new medium was the introduction of the camp meeting.

ii. Camp Meeting Preaching.

Francis Asbury was first introduced to the camp meeting style of religious worship in October of 1800 while traveling in Tennessee. He was highly impressed with what took place on that occasion. Asbury wrote of his experience:

> Yesterday, and especially during the night, were witnessed scenes of deep interest. In the intervals between preaching

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (May 12, 1785), I, 495.

[2] Ibid., I, 493.

[3] Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, p. 81.

> the people refreshed themselves and horses and returned upon the ground. The stand was in the open air, embosomed in a wood of lofty beech trees. The ministers of God, Methodists and Presbyterians, united their labors, and mingled with the childlike simplicity of primitive times. Fires blazing here and there dispelled the darkness, and the shouts of the redeemed captives, and the cries of precious souls struggling into life, broke the silence of midnight. The weather was delightful; as if heaven smiled, while mercy flowed in abundant streams of salvation to perishing sinners. We suppose there were at least thirty souls converted at this meeting. I rejoice that God is visiting the sons of the Puritans, who are candid enough to acknowledge their obligations to the Methodists.[1]

This is the description of one of the earliest camp meetings. It was under the sponsorship of the Presbyterian ministers but the visiting Methodist clergy were invited to participate.

This revivalistic emphasis within the Presbyterian fellowship stemmed from a small group of Presbyterian Log College revivalists who confined their efforts largely to the Middle Colonies.[2] The revival services were in conflict with Presbyterian doctrine and soon resulted in a conflict within the church. For years the Presbyterians continued to bear almost as large a part in the conduct of the meetings as did the Methodists.

The camp was a product of the frontier. It grew out of the life and experiences of the American scene. An attempt was made to introduce similar meetings into British Methodism, but the ministers would not countenance the plan.[3] On the American scene nobody planned

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (October 21, 1800), II, 476-477.

2. William Warren Sweet, Revivalism in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1944), p. 44.

3. Halford E. Luccock and Paul Hutchinson, The Story of Methodism (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1926), p. 253.

the camp meeting program in advance. It grew spontaneously as it came to meet a frontier need. The scattered settlements made it impossible for the people to gather in large groups for revival services without remaining over night or for a number of days. Its success was continued for generations because the people were constantly being lured to newer frontier regions which reproduced the conditions similar to those that had created the camp meeting situation.

Sweet credits the drawing power of the revivalistic preaching of the Presbyterian minister, James McGready, as the force which inaugurated the camp meeting movement.[1] So large were the numbers who attended his meetings in Logan County, Kentucky that they were forced to hold them out-of-doors. As people began to come from greater and greater distances, many were compelled to remain overnight and soon people were coming and remaining for several days. The first planned camp meeting was held in Logan County, Kentucky in July, 1800.[2]

How closely Asbury was able to observe the pulse of religious developments on the frontier is reflected in the fact that three months from the date of the first planned camp meeting in an out-of-the-way place in the mountains of Kentucky Asbury was observing his first camp meeting. From this day on the camp meeting became more and more of a Methodist institution. The Methodist organization made it possible to extend the camp meeting methods over a wide area in a brief period of time.

In the succeeding nine years the camp meeting movement grew rapidly. On August 13, 1809 Asbury notes, "It appears that the bishops will hold a camp meeting in every district; we are encouraged so to do."[1] Asbury makes no mention of his role, however, in the promotion of the camp meeting movement throughout Methodism. He does attribute to the people the desire for such meetings as can be seen in his entry of August 13, 1809, previously mentioned. On October 22, 1808 Asbury writes, "At Chavers a camp meeting had been appointed by the preachers and people."[2] Much earlier than this Asbury was traveling from one camp meeting to the next during the camp meeting season. Even when the camp meeting was at its height there were no rules in the Methodist Discipline to govern it. Preachers were never asked to answer formal questions concerning it at the Quarterly Conferences. It tended to grow and organize itself around the local situation until basic ideas were formulated into camp meeting manuals.[3]

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[1] Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 122.

[2] Ibid., p. 122.

The rapid rise of the camp meetings can be ascribed in a large measure to social conditions on the frontier. The border areas knew nothing of the restraints that accompanied the careful observance of the Puritan Sabbath. The territory was rough and the educational standards almost non-existent. The camp meeting, while transforming the religious life of the frontier, was also supplying a social need.

The great lack of the frontier was in personal contact. Many a

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, III, 317.

2. Ibid., III, 291.

3. Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 132.

family lived as much as a day's ride from their neighbor. Any excuse to these frontier families was sufficient to bring them together. Thus, it gave them an excuse for a period away from their drab existence at home, nor did they all come to the camp meeting for purely religious reasons. Many of those who looked forward to the camp meetings were roughs, bullies, and scoffers.

The Methodists encouraged the camp meeting for it fit into their spirit and the pattern of their traditions. There was a mobility about Methodism which soon made the camp meeting a Methodist Institution. Its doctrines, even in the mass meeting, were centered on the individual. Its class meetings in the local church made a necessary transition between the convert in the camp meeting and the individual member in the local church. Its preachers were not tied down to a single church nor congregation, and they were free to attend the camp meeting and return to follow-up the convert in his home environment. The Methodists had few meeting houses on the frontier and felt at home preaching in the open air or under temporary shelter. The itinerant nature of the Methodist Bishop permitted his attending the various camp meetings across his area, and also permitted him to advise here and promote there.

In all the churches it was found that certain ministers proved more adept in camp meeting preaching. The Methodist system made it easier to move these ministers from camp meeting to camp meeting and when the camp meeting season was over to return them to a local church.

The Methodist and Baptist ministers were both frontier men perfectly fitted for the rough-and-ready life of the camp meeting. They were not college trained men and took some pride in their lack of a formal education.

As Rowe points out:

> The methods of evangelism of the illiterate frontier preachers were intended to appeal to the emotions, and those men did not feel satisfied unless they succeeded in awakening a response.[1]

One of the most complete descriptions of the camp meeting when it had reached a high point of success in 1812 was recorded by Captain Marryat. The Captain was a British naval officer who had served before and after the war of 1812 in American waters. He was, however, like most Englishmen when it came to the camp meeting, a total outsider who had little sympathy for the camp meeting and found it harder to understand. From this viewpoint he describes the American camp meeting in 1812:

> The camp was raised upon . . . a piece of table-land comprising many acres. About one acre and a half was surrounded on the four sides by cabins built up of rough boards; the whole area in the center was fitted up with planks, laid about a foot from the ground, as seats. At one end, but not close to the cabins, was a raised stand, which served as a pulpit for the preachers, one of them praying, while five or six others sat down behind him on benches. There was ingress to the area by the four corners; the whole of it was shaded by vast forest trees, which ran up to the height of fifty or sixty feet without throwing out a branch; and to the trunks of these trees were fixed lamps in every direction, for the continuance of services at night.
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> Outside of the area, which may be designated as the church, were hundreds of tents pitched in every quarter, their snowy whiteness contrasting beautifully with the deep verdure and gloom of the forest. These were the temporary habitation of those who had come many miles to attend the meeting, and who remained there from the commencement until it concluded--usually a period of from five to ten days, but often much longer. The tents were furnished with every article necessary for cooking; mattresses to sleep upon; some of them even had bedsteads and chests of drawers, which had been brought in the wagons in which the people in this country usually travel. At a farther distance were all the wagons and other vehicles which had conveyed the people to the meeting, whilst hundreds of horses were tethered under the trees, and plentifully

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1. Rowe, Modern Pathfinders of Christianity, p. 129.

> provided with forage. Such were the general outlines of a most interesting and beautiful scene.
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> The major portion of those not in the area were cooking the dinners. Fires were burning in every direction; pots boiling; chickens roasting, hams seething; indeed, there appeared to be no want of creature comforts.
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> But the trumpet sounded as in the days of yore, as a signal that the service was about to recommence, and I went into the area and took my seat. One of the preachers arose and gave out a hymn, which was sung by the congregation, numbering seven or eight hundred. After the singing of the hymn was concluded he commenced an extensive sermon; it was good, sound doctrine and, although Methodism, it was Methodism of the mildest tone and divested of the bitterness of denunciation, as, indeed, is generally the case with Methodism in America. . .
>
> In front of the pulpit was a space railed off, and strewn with straw, which I was told was the anxious seat, and on which sat those who were touched by their conscience or the discourse of the preacher. On . . . one side . . . about twenty females, mostly young, squatted down on the straw; on the other a few men; in the center was a long form, against which some men were kneeling, with their faces covered with their hands as if occupied in prayer. Gradually the number increased, girl after girl dropped down upon the straw on one side, and men on the other . . . As the din increased so did their enthusiasm; handkerchiefs were raised to bright eyes, and sobs were intermingled with prayers and ejaculations. It became a scene of Babel; more than twenty men and women were crying out at the highest pitch of their voices, and trying apparently to be heard above the others.[1]

Before one becomes too critical of the extreme emotionalism of the frontier preaching he should come to understand the people to whom the minister was preaching. The frontiersman was a rough and lonely person. Social and religious gatherings were but release valves for emotional tensions which needed to find ways of release.

The period immediately following the Civil War was a period of transition. There was a change of religious and social climate. Denominational

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1. Luccock and Hutchinson, The Story of Methodism, pp. 253-256.

colleges grew rapidly following the war. The Methodist and Baptist institutions outnumbered all others. With the cultural change came an educated clergy and laity in the revivalist churches. The gulf between the educational standards of the Presbyterians and Methodists was greatly lessened.

Sweet says, "The presence of an educated and cool-headed leadership exercises a restraining influence on an over-emotionalized company of people."[1] This was true in the revivalistic preaching. The highly emotionalized revivalism began to lose its appeal to ministers and laity alike. A new social life developed on what was once a frontier. Strickland was lamenting the diminishing effectiveness of the camp meeting in 1858.

> Whole Methodist families came from the distance of forty and fifty miles, and some even further. They came in covered wagons, bringing their provisions with them. They did not, like many of the Methodists of the present day, take the care in the morning and, whirled along at the rate of thirty miles an hour, reach the encampment in time to hear the eleven o'clock sermon, take dinner at a boarding-tent, and return in the evening, wondering that they had received no spiritual benefit. Had they done so, camp meetings would not have been attended with the power that characterized them. But they closed up business at home, and made all their arrangements to spend a week at the feast of tabernacles, devoting themselves exclusively to the worship of God, and the result was invariably an increase in spirituality in the hearts of the members, and the conversion of their children. The great wonder is not how that so few are converted at our modern camp meetings, but that any are converted. This, however, is to be attributed to the fact that there are some who act upon the primitive plan of going prepared, and determined to remain during the continuance of the meeting.[2]

The same social and cultural factors that influenced the success of the camp meeting were instrumental in its wane. The frontier began to

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. 164.

2. Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, pp. 397-398.

disappear. The communities became more thickly populated and the people found it was now possible to move more rapidly from one point to another. It was no longer necessary to close up the home and live on the camp ground throughout the series of meetings. The rate of travel permitted the family to leave their home early in the morning and return home again at the close of the day. This had two results; there were a larger number of people who went to the camp meeting for just a day or even a part of a day, and there was a decrease in the effectiveness of the meetings. As Strickland pointed out in the previous quote, there was a cumulative emotional atmosphere built up from one meeting to the next. When the families went home and returned, it was found that this cumulative process was interrupted and its effect upon the individual was not as satisfactory. The increase in population made for greater sociability. The camp meeting was no longer serving as the only medium for social outlet. The increasing cultural standards of the clergy and laity decreased the emotional preaching of the clergy. These conditions which gave rise to the camp meeting passed and with them the flourishing camp meetings.

There yet remain large numbers of camp meeting grounds in the United States owned either by Conferences or camp meeting associations. These continue to pose problems for their Conferences as to how best to use them, for they have now become middle-class summer resorts or meeting places for brief summer institutes.

Another factor to be seen in the decline of the camp meeting was the change of the gospel emphasis. The camp meeting message was largely a message to the individual. Even though the sermons were preached to large congregations the decisions to be made were individual. To a large measure salvation was a personal matter. As Sweet notes, "To personalize religion is to emotionalize it."[1] Toward the close of the nineteenth century the Methodists began to preach a social gospel which lost much of its individual emphasis and emotional content.

During the seventies and eighties the camp meetings which continued underwent changes. At Chautauqua, New York in 1874 the old camp meeting grounds was transformed into an institution whose influence spread over the nation under the leadership of John H. Vincent.[2] By the end of the century little Chautauquas were springing up all over the country and many of them were utilizing the old camp meeting grounds. The cultural and religious climate had now changed and the assemblies were listening to lectures, and concerts.

In the larger cities the revival campaigns continued with varied successes. These gave rise to the professional revivalist, the greatest of whom was without doubt, Dwight L. Moody. Revivalism, however, disappeared for the most part when the impersonal became dominant over the personal. There have arisen in the twentieth century revivalistic sects which for the most part have established revivalism on a continuing basis, in tabernacles or established churches with radio and modern media of communication.

By the close of the nineteenth century the camp meeting had served its purpose on the frontier. It was as timely as the frontier itself and had gripped it and transformed it. What happened was that the camp meeting

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1. Sweet, Revivalism in America, p. xii.

2. Ibid., p. 166.

had satisfied a social and emotional need in bringing together the scattered units of these early communities. In the warmth of the large gathering where men and women touched elbow to elbow the emotionalism ran high and the individual was often swept along with the emotion of the crowd.

The camp meeting accomplished what the faithful circuit rider in his cabin-to-cabin preaching could have never hoped to have accomplished. The class meeting played its role in absorbing the converts but it could have never saved the frontier. It required a religion that was as dramatically emotional as the rugged energy of the frontiersman himself.

iii. City Preaching.

As has been noted the camp meetings were continued for a time in the form of large revivalist campaigns within the city. These owe their success for the most part to the professional evangelist who moved from one large town to another.

At the turn of the nineteenth century Asbury gave little attention to the city preacher. Asbury began his own American ministry in a city church. He was dissatisfied and unwilling to remain confined to the city parish. He wrote, "At present I am dissatisfied. I judge we are to be shut up in the cities this winter. My brethren seem unwilling to leave the cities."[1] A year later in January of 1772 Asbury says, "I find that the preachers have their friends in the cities, and care not to leave them. There is a strange party spirit."[2]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (November 2, 1771), I, 17.

[2] Ibid., (January 1, 1772), I, 20.

This emphasis on the city parish among the early ministers seems to have been strong when Asbury arrived in America. This attitude was not appreciated by Asbury. He felt the call of the frontier. Within a week after his arrival in New York he was traveling outward to the surrounding towns preaching the gospel. Through his own example he sought to teach his brother ministers a better way. The success of his endeavor was best illustrated by the rapid spread of Methodism among the frontier societies.

2. IN THE CLASS MEETING AND PRAYER MEETING

The class meeting was introduced on the American scene almost as early as Methodist preaching. It is impossible to say which came first, for as rapidly as a group of Methodists were gathered, a class was formed. The first class was begun by Captain Webb in 1771.[1] The growth of the class meeting is presented in Chapter five.

There is similar question as to when the class meeting began to taper off. Luccock and Hutchinson say in their book, "Few Americans remember a Methodist class meeting of the old order."[2] The same statement could not have been said concerning the prayer meeting. Sometime in the intervening years, between the death of Francis Asbury and the twentieth century, the prayer meeting had taken the more prominent position.

The class meeting was an integral part of the church, at least until 1816. During the latter part of Asbury's ministry he makes less mention of the class. This does not mean, however, that they were of less importance.

Strickland speaks of the prayer meetings held by Francis in his father's house in England. He wrote:

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[1] Asbury, "Incomplete Notes on Asbury's Journal," Vol. 1, May 20, 1772, item 1.

[2] Luccock and Hutchinson, The Story of Methodism, p. 168.

> Feeling that it was his duty to hold prayer meetings in the neighborhood, he united as many with him as he could of like faith, and commenced religious services in the house of a friend. These meetings were largely attended. Multitudes, attracted by the voice of praise and prayer in places where these sounds were before unknown, came to the meetings; many from idle curiosity, but more were prompted by a spirit of opposition, as appears from the fact that the friends at whose houses the meetings were held, fearing an outbreak, were unwilling to have them continued. . . . In his father's house he resumed the meetings for prayer.[1]

In his Journal Asbury does not refer to these meetings in his father's house as prayer meetings but says, "After this we met for reading and prayer."[2] It is impossible to say whether there was any similarity between these early meetings of Asbury's in England and his American prayer meetings.

Asbury first speaks of prayer meetings in his Journal on September 2, 1779. He writes:

> I was closely taken up in writing, but met the society; they appeared to be humbled, and resolved to set out anew. I pressed them to have prayer meetings, and they appointed one before they parted.[3]

On other occasions Asbury speaks of the class meeting. This is the first instance in which he speaks of the prayer meeting as a separate and distinct meeting. At no time in his Journal does he give a description of the prayer meeting.

Beginning with 1796 he makes numerous references to the forming of prayer meetings. The following are some of his references:

> My mind has been deeply impressed with the necessity of getting the people to set apart the five o'clock hour wholly

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1. Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, p. 37.

2. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 16, 1792), II, 159.

3. *Ibid*., I, 324.

> for prayer; to establish prayer meetings, and to speak evil of no man.[1]
>
> I thought there were no people here of spiritual understanding; but I was informed, to my comfort, that a number of simple-hearted people had formed themselves into a society for prayer; perhaps these will be some of the first fruits in this place.[2]
>
> We had a good prayer meeting at General Russell's.[3]
>
> I rejoice in the account Bro. Powell gave me of the state of religion at the Sound; he said that the Lord had owned and blessed their prayer meetings.[4]

The above references are a few of the entries by Asbury beginning with June, 1786 and ending with October, 1790. They show a new trend in the Methodist Societies. It is doubtful if the term "prayer meeting" was a substitution for the words "class meeting." The two terms were continued with less and less reference to the class meeting.

It would be safe to say that during the ministry of Francis Asbury the class meeting began to decline and the prayer meeting ascend in importance in the Methodist Church. The prayer meeting did not at first replace the old class meeting but gradually absorbed many of its functions.

The prayer meeting was a less formal meeting. It omitted many of the more objectionable characteristics of the class meeting. There appears to have been no regular collecting of dues, no checking of attendance, nor questioning of character. There was not the rigid restriction of membership as was found in the class meeting. The prayer meeting could be said

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (June 13, 1786), I, 512-513.
2. Ibid., (June 15, 1787), II, 13.
3. Ibid., (April 21, 1790), II, 81.
4. Ibid., (October 26, 1790), II, 99.

to have replaced the class meeting, continuing some of its more helpful functions.

3. IN THE PASTORAL CARE OF INDIVIDUALS

The present section will deal briefly with the transition of the pastoral care of individuals. Asbury's care of the individual will be dealt with in Chapter five. The changing roles of the Methodist minister in his care of the individual will be treated in Chapter six. It is necessary, however, to see the general transition that took place in the ministry of Asbury.

Preaching and group activity always play an important role in Asbury's ministry. There was a gradual shifting of emphasis toward the camp meeting but the stress, while on mass evangelism, was actually on an individualistic gospel. In his later years much of Asbury's time was given to the administration of the Church. He had the appointment of ministers, and the conducting of conferences.

His early ministry saw many hours spent with prisoners, but with the passing of years less and less time was alloted for such calling. One of his later prison visits is recorded by him in 1783, "I visited three young men who are to die shortly; they wept while I talked and prayed with them."[1] After this call Asbury makes no record of having visited a prison. He could have continued his regular prison calling but it is not likely that he did. The press of administrative responsibilities and travel undoubtedly prevented the continuance of this kind of pastoral activity.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (March 7, 1783), I, 456.

In other areas of his ministry the calling on the sick and shut-ins appears to have continued unchanged. He may have decreased the number of calls and the plan of calling, but the pastoral care of the individual continued.

Asbury's ministry permitted him to witness a transition in the care of individuals. The change of emphasis is not as great as it would appear however. One of the new approaches to the individual was through the camp meeting. As has been noted, this was not a mass psychology but a concentrated attention upon the individual over a period of days. The continued effectiveness of the isolated camp meeting experience was the result of the class meeting and later the prayer meeting. The camp meeting experience is referred to as an isolated experience since it was but a one or two week's experience out of the year. It was made a part of the on-going program of the church by the minister who introduced the converts into the local class meetings.

Toward the close of Asbury's ministry the Church was becoming more established on the frontier. For the most part, however, it continued a border church. The emphasis of the preaching had not changed.

In 1816 the class meeting was still an important factor in the Methodist societies. Its decline had begun and Asbury witnessed the growing need of an institution which would meet the changing needs of the individual. The prayer meeting was being promoted to meet this need where the class meeting met a growing resistance.

The emphasis was still upon the individual and though we do not see the radical change in Asbury's life, there was the developing emphasis on the local fellowship. The increase of population was rapidly making it possible for the circuit rider to lessen the number of miles in his circuit and give more time to the local society. This growing change of emphasis meant that the pastor would in time be able to absorb many of the functions of his local preacher. In such a change the preacher became more and more a pastor to his people.

CHAPTER V

AREAS OF PASTORAL EMPHASIS

1. SMALL GROUP EMPHASIS

The growth and development of small groups within the larger church structure have had a history in the Christian Church. The expansion of the inner spiritual life of like-minded persons has made it advisable that the parent Church permit the inclusion of these loyal minorities within the larger body. McConnell points out that for a full century before Wesley's birth minority societies were an important aspect of the English church life.[1]

Religion is basically a social phenomenon. Every religion tends to form itself into religious societies. Within these societies members are approved, initiated and expelled.

The combined efforts of these smaller groups have made a significant contribution to the religious spirit within many of the larger bodies. There have been periods in the history of the church when these societies have tended to become a threat to the parent body, but the intimate cravings of the individual minorities have warranted their continuance. Walker gives the year 1678 as the earliest date for the beginnings of these early groups in the English Church.[1] The earliest group met for prayer, reading of Scriptures, communion, and as an aid to the poor. These assemblages spread rapidly until by the year 1700 there were a hundred or more of them in London alone.[2]

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[1] Francis J. McConnell, John Wesley (New York: The Abingdon Press, 1939), p. 74.

The groups were composed generally of the communicants of the established Church and were tolerated by the clergy, even though many of the clergy often looked upon them with disdain and would refer to them as "fanatics." Such societies gave the pattern for more outreaching work such as the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge" initiated by Thomas Bray in 1699, and led to the founding of the society called "The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," in 1701.[3] The growth of the society movement had reached its peak and was on the wane when the Methodist societies came into prominence.

i. The Early Development of the Small Group Emphasis by John Wesley.

Wesley had the ability to utilize the experiences of the past and to borrow freely from his contemporaries. He saw the usefulness of an idea and had slight concern whether it was the product of friend or foe.

He learned from the Holy Club and the Moravians his concept of the small group. Charles Wesley had the Holy Club established when John returned to Lincoln College on November 22, 1729.[4] During the Georgia period Wesley adopted and used some of the basic ideas of the "band," at least on a tentative basis.[1]

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[1] Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1945), p. 508.

[2] Ibid., p. 508.

[3] Ibid., p. 508.

[4] Sidney Lee, "John Wesley," Dictionary of National Biography (New York: Macmillan Co., 1899), LX, 304.

On returning to England Wesley joined himself to some of these religious societies. It was in one of these societies that Wesley received his historic "heart warming" experience.[2]

(1) The Oxford Club. The Oxford Club was organized in the spring of 1729 by Charles Wesley and two of his fellows. The group met immediate opposition and was soon dubbed the "enthusiasts," "holy club," and the "Methodists;" it was this latter name that stuck.[3] Charles remarks in a letter of May 5, 1729 on the informal beginnings of the Oxford Club:

> Providence has at present put it in my power to do some good. I have a modest, humble, well-disposed youth lives next me, and have been (I thank God!) somewhat instrumental in keeping him so. . . . He is already content to live without any company but Bob's and mine.[4]

The number within the Oxford Club has never been exactly determined and may have varied from three to twenty-five.[5] The little group undoubtedly would have remained obscure and short-lived if it had not been for the introduction of the inspired leadership of John Wesley.

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[1] John Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, ed. Nehemiah Curnock (London: The Epworth Press, 1911), II, 53.

[2] Lee, "John Wesley," Dictionary of National Biography, LX, 306.

[3] Josiah Henry Barr, Early Methodist Under Persecution (New York: The Methodist Book Concern, 1916), p. 9.

[4] Frank Baker, Charles Wesley from Letters of Charles Wesley (London: The Epworth Press, 1948), p. 15.

[5] "John Wesley," Encyclopedia Britannica (14th ed.), XXIII, 516.

They were basically a group of like-minded students who had formed a society for the cultivation of their own religious life.[1] The charitable activities gave the assemblage a core of interest and greatly enriched the lives of the individual members. The established group rapport is seen in the willingness with which the members came together, at first twice a week, and soon every day from six to nine in the evening.[2] They met with one accord with a thorough spirit of comradeship throughout all their meetings. Wesley, in a later reflection, considered the Methodists at Oxford as of one body and, as it were, of one soul.

(2) Wesleyan Class Meetings. The early Wesley class meeting was a Moravian device developed by Wesley into something more efficient. The order of organization is seen in an extract of the Constitution of the Church of the Moravian Brethren:

> The Church is so divided that first the husbands, then the wives, then the widows, then the maids, then the young men, then the boys, then the girls, and lastly the little children, are in so many distinct classes; each of which is daily visited, the married men by a married man, the wives by a wife, and so of the rest. These larger are also (now) divided into near ninety smaller classes or bands, over each of which one presides who is of the greatest experience.[3]

The earliest units of organization were made up of the bands and classes for mutual confession. The bands consisted of converted people seeking Christian perfection. Wesley, in writing to the Church at Herrnhut, speaks of having eight bands of men consisting of fifty-six persons. He says there were two small bands of women; one of three, and the other of five persons.[1] These bands were usually made up of not fewer than five nor more than ten members and met weekly as a group.[2] The more serious among the society were selected to meet once or twice a week in smaller numbers for a more intimate union with each other. In the larger cities the more advanced, who were pressing on to perfection, were placed in Select Bands. Since the bands were principally for the sharing of inner experiences, Wesley considered it a safeguard to form bands of married men, single men, married, and single women.

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[1] Clinton Cornelius Armstrong, "The Religious Leadership of John Wesley" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Graduate School, Boston University, 1950), p. 96.

[2] Maximin Piette, John Wesley in the Evolution of Protestantism, trans. Rev. J. B. Howard (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1937), p. 284.

[3] Wesley, The Journal of John Wesley, II, 53.

The debt on the Bristol Chapel led to an even more favorable arrangement. For financial reasons Wesley saw fit to redivide the society into "little companies or classes" about twelve in each class.[3] Over each class he assigned a sub-pastor or financial supervisor, and since these classes were called together weekly for the collection of funds, it was a ready opportunity for the class leader to examine the members and detect insincerity or disorderliness. Thus, circumstances led to the formation of groups of optimum psychological size for good

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1. John Telford (ed.), The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M. (London: The Epworth Press, 1931), I, 260.

2. William R. Cannon, "Accomplishments to Wesley's Death," Methodism, ed. by William K. Anderson (New York: Methodist Publishing House, 1947), p. 34.

3. Wesley, Journal, II, 528.

group dynamics. These early units were formed for the religious development of the individual in a religious environment rather than a pure theological orientation.

The class-meeting was a blessing to Wesley. The rapid growth of the Societies was threatening to destroy the personal touch. The classes limited as they were to about a dozen members were ideal for edification and encouragement of new converts. The classes differed basically from the bands in that the classes consisted of the new converts and the bands of the more advanced Christians.

Wesley needed help in maintaining discipline in the spiritual life of these fast-growing societies. Their division into classes, each with its leader, was the answer to this need.[1] His rules placed positive restrictions upon the members forbidding them not only profanity, drunkenness and quarreling, but also smuggling, usury, and worldly amusements. The organization of class meetings proved favorable for the promotion of Christian fellowship and it immediately took a prominent place in the Methodist society. It was not long before membership in the society depended upon one's being enrolled in such a class for Christian fellowship and pastoral oversight.[2]

The group spirit that existed in these fellowships was vividly illustrated by the attendance within the group. The attendance at the class sessions was not an absolute necessity. Members in good standing received tickets quarterly with their attendance record kept thereon.

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1. Richard M. Cameron, The Rise of Methodism (New York: Philosophical Library, 1954), p. 292.

2. "Methodism," The New International Encyclopedia, 2nd. ed. (New York: Dodd, Mean and Company, 1925), XV, 504.

Cannon notes how many of the members came to cherish these tickets and considered them their most prized possession, so much so, that they often insisted on their being buried with them at death.[1] The constant sifting of members by the leaders held membership at a premium. On February 24, 1741 Wesley says, "I took account of every person to whom any reasonable objection was made."[2] Those who would confess their faults and promise better behaviour were received back into the society while the others were placed on trial, that is, if they did not withdraw. It was such discipline as this that brought about within the class a single purpose. Wesley's visits to the individual class became progressively further apart and in the interval it was the class leader's responsibility to enforce the discipline. Wesley set aside a special time from ten to two each day but Saturday as a time for speaking with any who desired it.[3] This time was set aside especially for the disorderly members of the bands. No mention is made as to whether the same opportunity was made available to members of the classes. It is definite that in the bands and possibly in the classes Wesley promoted the spiritual life of the individual through the use of pastoral interviews and counseling.

Wesley was convinced that there was no better way of coming to know the society members than through the class meeting. He expresses this conviction in a letter written to a society member sometime between

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1. William R. Cannon, "Accomplishments to Wesley's Death," Methodism, p. 34.

2. Wesley, Journal, II, 429.

3. Ibid., p. 440.

March 4, 1760 and 1777, in which he says:

> We have a fuller, clearer knowledge of our own members, than to those belonging to other societies, and may therefore without any culpable partiality, have a better opinion of them.[1]

It was at first the band and later the class meeting that became the core around which the greater Methodist movement took its structure and offered its greatest instruction to the individual.

ii. Small Groups in Colonial American Methodism.

It was through the smaller groups that colonial Methodism developed its greatest sense of spiritual fellowship. For this reason, the Methodist class meeting was encouraged among the colonists. The class meeting was adaptable to the sparsely populated frontier area, where meeting houses were almost non-existent and heat and shelter a continuing problem.

Methodist preaching often occurred in the scattered areas long before the class meetings became organized. We find this to have been the experience both at Burlington and at "Trent-town," New Jersey.[2]

(1) The Class Meeting as a Basic Group. The class meeting in America, as in England, was always a part of the larger congregation. In these classes there was a definite outline of function, purpose and organization which both restricted the admission of members to the

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[1] John Wesley, "Extracts from Letters by the Rev. Wesley, to a Member of his Society," The Methodist Magazine, (1799), XXII, 47-48.

[2] Francis Asbury, "Incomplete notes on Asbury's Journal," Vol. I, April 30, 1772 and May 20, 1772 item 1.

circle and rejected those who were unwilling to align themselves with the existing standards. These restrictions tended to limit the impact of Methodism upon the larger community, but added to the solidarity of the group by focusing its interest on a "we-group" which, as Johnson has noted, is one of the ethnocentric tendencies appearing in religious communities.[1] The "we-group" attitude rapidly developed within the class a sense of the members possessing unique values of their own.

The high requirements for admission to membership and the rigid standard of conduct tended to keep many persons out of the in-group. These limitations made it possible for the group to demand that each member be willing to declare all his faults. In this sharing process there developed a sense of inner-social relationship, whose limitations were always coupled with a rigid code of prohibitions. All this tended toward making the class more basic as a social group or as McNeil has stated, "A group interested in the mutual cure of (their own) souls."[2]

In most instances the social structure of the English and American class meetings was the same. Asbury takes note of these various groups.

> February 27, 1791 I was much blessed in meeting the married and single men apart. I also met the married and single women.[3]
>
> April 25, 1792 I met the married men and women apart, and we had great consolation in the Lord.[4]

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[1] Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Religion (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1945), p. 255.

[2] John T. McNeil, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951), p. 279.

[3] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 110.

[4] Ibid., II, 149.

The group pattern in these American Methodist societies emerged slowly during this colonial period. Asbury's emphasis was on the forming of both large and small groupings. The variety of groups centered around the social and spiritual setting with a continuing emphasis on the spiritual.

Asbury tended to follow much the same pattern as Wesley in assigning leaders to the separate groups. On special occasions when he was in a given area he would meet the married women, and the single women and the married men and the single men separately. It was Asbury's custom to take a direct hand in the guidance of the small class meeting in an effort to maintain its standards and purposed function.

One of the outstanding features of these small groups was their "exclusiveness," that is in the better sense of the word. Asbury felt that the standards established by Wesley were good and that their maintenance was necessary for the promotion of the growth and well-being of the fellowship. When the class tended towards conformity with community ethics he was disturbed, and on a number of occasions sharply reduced the numbers within the group. The size and number of groups did not appear to have been of any great significance. It was his opinion that a closely knit and well-disciplined group was a greater contribution to the Christian individual and the church than a loosely joined and unprincipled society.

The use of tickets in the maintenance of class standards was not used as extensively in America as in England. There was, nevertheless, the same effort to continue the high standards of admission. Asbury never tolerated the adjustment of his code to the situation.

The principle stood; it was the individual who had to make the necessary adjustment. The lay-preachers, over whom Asbury had pastoral supervision, often attempted to make their own local rectification of the class pattern. Asbury refused to accept changes in the accepted patterns of the class. On August 10, 1774 Asbury criticises the free admission of individuals before they are fully conversant with the purpose of the class and have shown by their actions a willingness to abide by "Society Requirements." In Asbury's words: "It is a great folly to take people into society before they know what they are about."[1]

Asbury was sharply criticized by the members of the societies for his firmness in maintaining the standards of the society. Many society members felt that Asbury held too rigidly to the letter of the law. It was not uncommon, where he felt it necessary, for Asbury to stand at the door of the meeting and admit or reject those who came to the meeting. Asbury says, "So I stayed for Brother W., and heard that many were offended by my shutting them out of society-meetings."[2] The same standards as those held in the society were carried over into the class meeting. After each class meeting he insisted that the class leader report to the minister in charge each member's attendance, conduct, contribution, and observance of the ordinances.[3] The continual reporting of the individual member's conduct to the circuit pastor made it possible for the pastor and the bishop to maintain these high standards of class conduct.

Once the member had been admitted his continuance in the class depended on his individual conduct. Asbury stood as the final judge in each situation. The only appeal over Asbury's decision seems to have been the Annual or General Conference over which Asbury had a dominating influence. When Asbury saw the actions of one of his stewards and considering it not in harmony with what he considered proper conduct for a steward, he confronted him.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 124.

[2] Ibid., (April 28, 1772), I, 28.

[3] Asbury, "Incomplete Notes on Asbury's Journal," Notes by A. J., Vol. I under date of April 28, 1772, item 14.

> I spoke to our steward, whose conduct did not altogether please me--frequently avoiding to speak to me--absenting himself from the meetings of the leaders--the appearance of dissimulation--opposing our rules--and consulting persons who were not members of our society.[1]

on other occasions Asbury tells how he found it necessary to deal closely with the members.[2] When his warnings continued unheeded, he considered it his duty to eject the individuals from the class without too much consideration as to the number within the group. At one session Asbury reduced the group by almost fifty percent.[3] On the same day he says he removed another woman for excessive drinking. With the continued use of this stern pastoral authority these early Methodist meetings continued to maintain a high standard.

The loyalty that developed within these fellowships is to be seen in the actions of a Mrs. Mary Thorne of Philadelphia who, after joining the Methodist movement, found her mother and father opposing her actions and her mother going so far as to resolve to move the family to Newbern and away from the Methodists. Mrs. Thorne prayed about the situation and decided that she would remain among her spiritual relatives.[1] It was such group spirit as this shown by Mrs. Thorne that brought about the ever increasing sense of mutual empathy demonstrated among these early Methodists.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (October 6, 1772), I. 45.

[2] Ibid., (May 2, 1773), p. 72.

[3] Ibid., (October 13, 1775), p. 164.

(2) The Psychological Value of the Class Meetings. Asbury did not present his thoughts in the terms of a psychologist but approached the situation from the practical point of view of doing that which seemed necessary in order to accomplish his desired ends. It is the reasoning behind his actions which are rich in psychological insights for the pastoral psychologist.

Asbury was impatient with his contemporary brother ministers who were content to remain in the cities catering to the large crowds. Asbury would rather travel throughout the country among the people and recommended this practice to his fellow Methodist ministers.[2] In his travels he was forming small societies. The class meeting was a small and intimate fellowship and was thus able to meet definite psychological needs existing among a lonely frontier people. To them the class was more than a spiritual institution created to guide them into a deeper spiritual life. Jessie Lee, in commenting on the class, says:

> We were only a religious society, and not a church: and any member of any church, who would conform to our rules, and meet in a class, had liberty to continue in their own church.[3]

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[1] John Lednum, The Rise of Methodism in America (Philadelphia: Published by author-sold Methodist Book Stores, 1859), p. 43.

[2] Jesse Lee, A Short History of the Methodist Episcopal Church (Baltimore: Magill and Clime, Book-Sellers, 1810), p. 31.

[3] Ibid., p. 41.

These early beginnings were an "extra church" activity. In a society where one's neighbor often lived a mile or more away there was need for social groupings which could serve the social and emotional needs of the individual. It does not necessarily follow that it met these needs completely but presented the opportunity.

The activities for young people were limited. There were a number of social events. The men and boys would meet occasionally at the community general store. The church or society, however, was the only regular on going activity at which young people of the opposite sex could meet under socially accepted conditions and sublimate some of their inner uncertainties and emotional drives. It was also at these meetings where the husband and the wife found an opportunity to alleviate their sense of loneliness. This sharing did not always take the form of vocal expression. The participants were not even aware of repressed feelings of loneliness so that without actually talking about how they felt they found it possible to release some of their pent-up impulses.

It is necessary for the psychologist to discriminate between the mechanism present in the inner actions of large and small groups. Asbury used both groups very effectively. Since groups vary in their structure and purpose, it must be noted that the differences develop gradually and the types shade into one another.

Asbury dealt with a variety of groups. Among the various groups were the revival congregation and the class meeting. The psychologist must draw the fine lines which distinguish the revival group from the class meeting. It is also necessary to see the relationship which exists between the two co-existing religious groups. The revival crowd has emotional excitement which tends to hold it together. Parallel phenomena are found in the Crusades, or in the mediaeval "dancing manias" or even in early colonial "witchcraft mania."[1] Some of this same emotional content is to be seen in the present day revivalism.

The distinguishing characteristics of the respective groups are to be seen in the structure and in the method by which the co-operative spirit is effected. The revival congregation in the technical sense of the term was a "crowd." The role of the colonial pastor was to produce from a heterogeneous group a spirit of co-operation. He approached this through suggestion which tended to suppress individual inhibitions and to create within the individual a willingness to cooperate.

Under Coe's classification of religious groups, the colonial class meeting could be termed "A Sacerdotal Group."[2] Its organization was well established. Its structure did not require that its continuance depend upon an emotional core. The class meeting was a group under specialized control. It was thoroughly organized under a rigid code of standards with the centralized authority resting solely in the group leader. The leader's original control came with his appointment. His continued jurisdiction resided in his ability to direct the group.

Unity within the class meeting was brought about and retained not so much by suggestion as by deliberation, systematization, and established ritual. The ritual was not an elaborate form but the routine ordering of events familiar to the group members. Through the use of sharing the group was drawn into a group mind until an empathic relationship existed between members binding them in a bond of fellowship.

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[1] George Albert Coe, The Psychology of Religion (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1916), p. 120.

[2] Ibid., p. 125.

The essential thing in the building of Christian character among the class members was habit-formation through the control of thought and conduct. The class member was permitted only limited deviations of conduct.

Many of the colonial families lived in isolated areas. There was little opportunity for the youth to learn the art of social conversation. The class provided a possible outlet for their repressed feelings of disappointment and fear. Some of this emotional release is to be seen expressed among the leaders in Asbury's remark of October 9, 1772, "I met the leaders, and there were some sharp debates."[1] Asbury did not discourage such debating, rather in some instances where inhibited tension appeared to have been present, Asbury would promote the sharp exchange of ideas.

He recognized these underlying psychological dynamics; he himself encouraged this sharing of thoughts, fears, and emotions. Asbury says:

> In meeting the bands, I showed them the impropriety and danger of keeping their thoughts and fears of each other to themselves: this frustrates the design of bands; produces coolness and jealousies towards each other."[2]

Thus a group originally formed as an economic expediency becomes a psychological mechanism for the sharing of one's thoughts, the talking out of one's fears, and the general removal of social tensions and inner emotional conflicts which develop both within the Christian and the family circle.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 45.

[2] Ibid., (September 17, 1774), p. 128.

In meeting with a society on June 12, 1774 Asbury reminded them plainly that the bands and classes were formed purely to help them as individuals to a more fully developed life. To neglect the meetings, he felt was to defeat the very purpose for which the bands had been created. He says, "We took people into our societies to make them to become entire Christians."[1]

Much of the daily life of the member was given to the common task of making a living, but the band meetings gave them a higher outlet. Participation in the bands gave them an opportunity of social and religious leadership.

There was still the further psychological advantage of having channeled through an acceptable behavior pattern the desire for leadership. The societies were divided into classes of ten to twelve and required many leaders. It was in such a role as class leader that the colonist, normally tied to his land, was able to find a sense of importance among his peers. In the routine course of a day's work the individual with the impulse to superiority found little as a medium of expression. Many of the young men of this colonial period developed his speaking ability in the Methodist class meeting, later to become an active minister or a political leader. The class in this way served functions which were other than purely religious. The group experience gave to the individual the necessary confidence to appear before others.

The class leader had the opportunity of developing leadership ability. He learned to speak before others and to think on his feet. Because of these qualities he carried much of the leadership in colonial America. He was responsible for much of the direction of early Methodism, in as much as, the circuit-riding preacher visited the local congregation occasionally, preached, conducted the necessary business, and was on his way.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 114.

(3) The Religious Value of the Class Meeting. The Methodist societies had to fulfill the role of the Church from their very beginning on the American scene. Neither Jesse Lee nor Francis Asbury makes any claim in those early days of being a Church. They felt some pride in the fact that their group was made up of members of the several churches. The church people in many of the areas such as Maryland and Virginia were in the established Church where the minister was supported by a state tax. Lee says there were places for hundreds of miles where there was not a one to baptize a child, except the minister of the established church: "The greatest objection to this plan, therefore, was that by far the greatest part of them were destitute of religion."[1]

The concept that the Methodists were the genuinely religious people of the community was not universally accepted by the colonial people. These small groups met with strong opposition and at times it would appear that there was no great good being done.[2] The leading citizens were often repelled by the Methodists and would close the courthouse to their use.

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[1] Lee, A Short History of the Methodist, p. 41.

[2] Asbury, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, (April 9, 1772), p. 17.

There was, however, a growing sense of spiritual unity in the Methodist fellowship from which there came a feeling of both life and liberty. Increasingly the Methodist membership became conscious that they were a distinct group of worshippers separated from the Episcopal Church.

The class meeting played an important part in establishing and maintaining this sense of unity. The standards for membership in the class were very rigid and admission was most readily acceptable immediately following conversion. This spiritual experience in the life of the individual made him appear more eligible for membership in the sight of the class leader. It tended to prepare the applicant's mental and emotional life for the rigid restrictions which were placed upon him in this new fellowship.

There was a distinct character change in the convert immediately following the crisis of conversion which, as the case may be, lasted from a few hours to several days or months.[1] In many ways during this period the intellectual concepts and emotional feelings of the new convert led him completely to alter his daily habits. Starbuck refers to it as: "The functioning of a new and exalted personality. The 'ego' is lifted up into new significance."[2]

It is this new and exalted personality which made the person appear to be living in a new world in which old experiences were seen as through new eyes. When the new convert was immediately admitted into the class meeting the rigid restrictions appeared less objectionable. The individual in these brief hours or days had been called out of himself and had a much more active sympathy toward the outside world. These new altruistic impulses found an outlet in the organized class groups. They tended to bring out new abilities which in reality had been latent factors already buried in the personality.

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[1] Edwin Diller Starbuck, The Psychology of Religion (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), p. 118.

[2] *Ibid*., p. 119.

When the new convert was admitted into the class membership during this utopian period, it was possible to extend the personality transformation through a process of re-education. Thus was molded a new social order in which the individual had the collective assistance of the larger group to uphold him in the face of social criticism. Within the ordering of the class meeting the individual found his ideal society. He was given a sense of direction, and a will to control his individual movements.

Even though the leaders of the Methodist movement made no claim to the creation of a church, they were building a fellowship in which there was an empathic inter-fellowship of emotional dependence. After the formal establishment of the Methodist Church at the Christmas conference, it was a simple matter to adjust this closely knit organization of societies into a well-organized Church.

2. THE FAMILY VISITATION

i. The Psychological Function of the Pastor in the Colonial American Family.

The practice of general house-to-house calling has varied from time to time in the history of the Christian church. There have been those who have seen little value in it as a part of the minister's task. Others have felt that there was much virtue in calling at as many doors as possible. There are many specific reasons why a minister might call in a home in his parish. As the activities of Francis Asbury are viewed in his Journal, it can be noted that some calls were necessary to carry on the administrative work of his office. However, there seemed to have been other fundamental reasons for his calling on his people.

Asbury would seem to have been in agreement with Carroll Wise in that "the basic purpose of calling is to develop and maintain a close pastoral relationship with the people of the parish."[1] He would have gone a little further and placed equal importance on the spiritual welfare of the parishioner. The relationship between pastor and parishioner had value to the minister only in so far as it bore fruit in the spiritual life of the church member.

This section will limit itself to the conduct of Asbury in the general pastoral call. Other sections of the chapter will deal with his work with the sick, the shut-in, the prisoner, and general counseling.

Asbury as a frontier pastor received a welcome in the majority if not all of the frontier homes. Among these people was a sense of loneliness which was the more intensified by the surrounding dangerous wilderness. For days no voice was heard but that of the family circle. The appearance of the preacher brought a fresh emotional breath, and in many cases a release of family tension. Through the pastor the family was able to learn the news and events of the larger community.

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[1] Carroll A. Wise, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), p. 169.

(1) The Pastor and Family Rapport. The colonial pastor was a welcomed and most highly respected person of the larger community. In many instances he was the only person who could either read or write and was informed of the events of the world. His entrance into the family circle was thus a welcome event even in the most nominally Christian home.

Though Asbury did not have the opportunity of many visits to the individual home, his complete sharing of a home during his infrequent stays established a rapport which was deep and intimate. It would appear to have been his custom when in a given area to visit as many families and as often as possible. This procedure is reflected in his entry of March 2, 1796:

> And now, what have I been doing? I have preached eighteen sermons, met all the classes, fifteen in number, written about eighty letters, read some hundred pages, visited thirty families again and again.[1]

It is possible that these thirty families represented all those of the community. When one considers the size of the colonial American family and the number of classes in this given community, it must be assumed that Asbury was serving his entire local constituency. The evidence of good rapport is seen in his continuing welcome into the family circle again and again.

The establishment of rapport was not dependent alone upon family visitation. It was sublimated by the class sessions which were the actual opening of one's self before his fellow Christians so that when the pastor entered the home he came not as a total stranger but as one who had already shared with the individual member many of his intimate thoughts and problems.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 292.

Rapport is best revealed in the manner with which the parishioner confided in his pastor. The tenor of such confidence is seen in the following personal relationship, "I had an open and free conversation with Mr. Gough."[1] On other occasions Asbury speaks of the willingness with which the family talked with him.

> I am taken from house to house, and the brethren wish the pleasure of seeing me, and those who are acquainted with their families will come to see me also.[2]

Visited about one dozen families, and talked to them personally.[3] Such friendships developed a personal empathic relationship between Asbury and his parishioners.

(2) Methods in the Pastoral Visit. To come to an understanding of the methods and function of the pastoral visit it is necessary to attempt to see it through the eyes of the caller as well as through the eyes of the parishioner on whom the call has been made. The fact that Asbury felt the call a part of his pastoral work is revealed in his words of July 18, 1774.

> A poor, unhappy young woman, who had abandoned herself to the devil and wicked men, being at the point of death, and expecting to go shortly and render an account of herself to God, sent for me to visit her. I felt some reluctance; but considering the danger her soul was in, thought it my duty to go. She was very attentive while I spoke plainly to her, and made prayer to God in her behalf.[4]

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 346.

2. Ibid., (June 25, 1797), II, 345.

3. Ibid., (July 27, 1795), II, 272.

4. Ibid., I, 118.

This was not one of Asbury's usual pastoral visits but a call resulting from a personal request. It is interesting to note that Asbury felt a reluctance to go even at her solicitation. He did not feel that an invitation was sufficient cause to require that he give his time in general conversation. More important was the state of her soul which in this case, due to her physical condition, was in great danger. The spiritual need of the individual, regardless of her past life, made it urgent that some attention be given her need.

What portion of his time was given to pastoral calling? No planned schedule appears in his Journal. Some ratio of time can be seen in a comparison of pastoral calls with his other areas of activity. In one statement of three days of labor he notes that he has ridden a hundred miles, preached five one hour sermons, read about two hundred pages, and spent ten hours in family visitation.[1] This time ratio cannot be held as a hard and fast rule because on July 27, 1795 he meets five classes and visits about a dozen families. On May 24, 1795 he records that he spent a part of the week visiting from house to house. He reveals no general outline of purpose, just a house to house visitation, and he comments, "speaking to all I find."[2]

An analysis of the order of listing of activities in Journal entries is of little help in shedding more light on the allotment of his time, other than to show an order of preference. Preaching came first in almost every case. This may have been the result of the appointed times of the services but it would seem, because of the general pattern,

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 483.

2. Ibid., II, 266.

to have been more than a mere necessity of schedule. Following the sermon came the class meeting, next the visitation of the sick, and finally a house-to-house visitation as his time would permit. Such a distribution of time is seen in his entry of June 6, 1787 when he writes, "I keep myself busy in visiting the families of the society, or the sick, or meeting class, if some other business does not call me."[1] The general ordering of events have been reversed in this statement but the fact remains that all the available time in the day's schedule was used in pastoral visitation.

On whom did the Bishop call in the course of his pastoral rounds? How far in advance the schedule was arranged or even considered cannot be determined. His preaching schedule was by appointment. This he reveals in his entry of August 15, 1786 when he felt forced to move on lest he miss his appointments in Philadelphia and then be late in the Jerseys and New York.[2] One may perhaps say "general appointments," for a matter of a day or even two did not seem greatly to disturb his time schedule. The family visitation could be said then to have followed the course of these appointments. The interjection of extra calls was common and depended upon the immediate circumstances. Such was the case on November 16, 1792 when leaving Baltimore he saw fit to make an unexpected call:

> I left Baltimore, and, contrary to my first intention, called on the widow H. whose daughter was awakened the last time I was here, and still continues to be happy in the Lord.[3]

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 12.

2. Ibid., I, 517.

3. Ibid., II, 173-174.

Here is an unmistakable change in plans and the implication that a definite schedule was being followed.

Certain basic principles guided Asbury's choice of homes on which he called. The first was definitely the need for spiritual guidance. The second was a place at which he could find a night of lodging and possibly a room for a religious service. The temptation to give an excessive part of his time to those who were wealthy must have not been lacking in Asbury's pastoral work, for he warns himself, "We cannot spend more time with the rich than with the poor."[1]

The pastoral visit served the people in many ways. There were the social function, the spiritual, and the psychological. Asbury in the course of his visit never forgot his spiritual role. Since the family was the basic unit of the community, the home often served as the meeting place for the church. It was also the center for religious instruction. Instruction and prayer appeared in almost every visit whether the visit was short or long. On a number of occasions there was also the serving of the sacrament. The Lord's Supper, however, was a special event and came often only as the result of a personal request.

Bishop Asbury, in visiting, speaks of "talking, lecturing, and giving a family sermon." These three phrases can be considered as interchangeable, referring to the same basic method of communication. They were a form of religiously oriented conversation centered around the needs of a given individual or family. There was still further the need of a spiritual and social gregariousness to which the colonial pastor spoke.

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, III, 61.

He would relieve the family tensions and offer emotional and spiritual forgiveness of both conscious and unconscious sins.

In one of his general statements Asbury summarizes his visitations in his entry of July 27, 1795, "Visited about one dozen families, and talked to them personally about their souls, and prayed with them."[1] These calls became personal calls as well as family calls as can be seen on June 8, 1780, "I called to see friend Marks and family; he was worn down with family troubles."[2] Asbury does not go on to give the details of these problems since the Journal entries must be limited, but leaves us with the impression that he has given counsel both individually and to the family.

The scarcity of ordained pastors on the frontier made the serving of Holy Communion an outstanding service in the family circle; often it was dependent upon the arrival of the pastor or the Bishop. On one occasion Asbury mentions the serving of communion to a sick mother at her request:

> Came to Mr. Winter's an able planter, who had us dine with him and stay the night. His wife's mother being ill, and desiring the sacrament, we went to her apartment, and there had a melting, solemn time; in this worthy family we had prayer night and morning."[3]

In such accounts as this there is reflected Asbury's personal empathy toward the family situation.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 272.

[2] Ibid., I, 375.

[3] Ibid., (January 23, 1786), I, 506.

Asbury approached the family as a Christian brother and friend. Some may feel that he was too forward, forcing entrance into the person's life where he had little right to trespass. His personal talks and his direct counsel were given as a spiritual advisor and in the majority of instances was received as such.

The position of the individual within the community did not alter Asbury's role as spiritual advisor. His approach was the same for the rich and the poor, for the great and the humble. His office as Christian minister made him a representative of the divine powers coming with a message to his fellowman. In reflecting on one of his recent visits with one in high position he saw fit to comment:

> I visited Charles Tait, a judge; I did not present myself in the character of a gentleman, but as a Christian, and a Christian minister: I would visit the President of the United States in no other character; true, I would be innocently polite and respectful--no more.[1]

He is not to show preference toward those of position nor come in excessive politeness. They are to be to him as brothers in Christ needing spiritual guidance as much as but not more than the lowest socially in the village. The manner of introduction is not clear but he is definite that he comes not as an ordinary gentleman. He is more than an interested neighbor, more than a professional laborer, and more than a fellow-Christian. He is coming in the spirit of a Christian and expecting to be received as a Christian minister.

The question arises as to the necessary length of the pastoral call. It is a question to which Asbury has given serious consideration, but seems to have arrived at but one rule: remain as long as necessary to accomplish the maximum good and no longer. His own calls varied from a few minutes to a whole day. He mentions that in one three day period he has spent ten hours in calling but gives no details as to how many calls were accomplished.[1] Again he is seen visiting from house to house remaining as long as it would seem advisable, offering a prayer and moving on to another home. With Mr. Snow, one of the aged prophets, he spent an entire afternoon without any thought of his having over-stayed.[2] Then again at the Lippett's he was content to stay a day. The implication is that to have remained longer would have been wasting his time. He says: "I found a calm retreat at Lippett's, where we can rest ourselves. The Lord is in this family; I am content to stay a day, and give them a sermon."[3] The day was necessary for Asbury's personal rest and while there he met some of the spiritual needs of the family.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, (December 7, 1806), III, 242.

Gradually there emerges a pattern as to the length of the pastoral visit, but determined not by the measure of time but the degree of accomplishment in the light of that specific situation.

Continual family visitation for Asbury was therefore an integral part of his pastoral office. He leaves no question as to his attitude toward its role in the life of the pastoral minister. There remains but the problem of a traveling minister being able to meet the needs of his many scattered parishioners.

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, (November 5, 1784), I, 483.

2. Ibid., (June 20, 1791), II, 124.

3. Ibid., (July 29, 1794), II, 235.

Our greatest insight into the universal practice comes from John Lednum who gives a picture of the traveling minister as one who comes for a brief period and then moves on to another area of his parish. It is the local preacher and the individual member who fill in the long gaps in the pastoral ministration. Lednum writes:

> Sometimes for weeks they had preaching regularly from these men, and then for months they had very little preaching; but at that time nearly all the Methodists were prophets, and on the Lord's day they divided themselves into little bands, and went out through the neighborhood where there were open doors, and sung their hymns, prayed, read the Scriptures, and talked to the people, and soon some began to add a word of exhortation. These efforts were owned of the Lord, and the work spread from neighborhood to neighborhood; thus was the Deer Creek society raised in 1770.[1]

Through the efforts of the local fellowship the total needs of the society were being continually met. In some instances the local members would continue the preaching services, in others they met for a period of sharing and, as Lednum has mentioned, went forth into the community as small groups of evangelists preaching the word of God by word of mouth. How many were in these small groups of callers we do not know.

Francis Asbury saw the pastoral call filling a definite purpose in the life of his parishioners. He would remain as long as he found it possible to bring assistance. In some cases this was personal or emotional adjustment, and in others what would appear to have been of a more spiritual nature. But in either case it was the whole individual of which Asbury was interested with an emphasis upon its relationship to the spiritual development and the conversion of the individual soul. The length of a call and the number of calls made were secondary and not of great importance. Asbury felt he was a servant of God. God, therefore, directed his life and he needed but follow the directions.

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[1] John Lednum, Rise of Methodism in America, p. 69.

The pastoral visit did not have first claim on Asbury's schedule. Preaching was his first task, and visitation came either third or fourth.

ii. As an Administrative Function.

A certain number of the Bishop's visits can be considered as purely a function of his administrative office. The Bishop, more than his fellow colonial ministers, had responsibilities which were simply promotional in nature and can be considered separately. On a growing frontier it would have been impossible for the Bishop to have separated his pastoral responsibilities from his administrative functions. Asbury was more than a bishop, he was a pastor to pastors. He was minister to both the pastors of the colonial church and to the members of his circuit. It was not uncommon to see the Bishop going from house to house collecting funds for the orphans or the college. On December 5, 1791 Asbury writes, "I went from house to house through the snow and cold, begging money for the support of the poor orphans at Cokesbury."[1] Again he says on September 8, 1789, "I spent some time in visiting from house to house, and begging for the college."[2]

In addition to making personal collections for the college Asbury conducted a campaign among his pastors encouraging them to collect funds.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 138.

[2] Ibid., I, 59.

These fund-raising campaigns were informal but filled his otherwise idle moments by the writing of letters to the preachers across the church.[1] Such financial activities absorbed a part of his time but made possible an ever expanding Methodist Episcopal Church.

Numerous administrative duties called upon his limited time. These activities grew from the early seventies to the turn of the century. Asbury took a personal interest in passing upon the character of both the ministers in service and those young men entering the ministry. Toward the end of the century Asbury came more and more to depend upon letters to meet the problems across his expanding Methodism. In 1796 he writes, "I suppose I must write nearly a thousand in a year."[2] However, letters did not always meet the need and especially in his earlier days he felt it necessary to be on hand, personally directing the activity and making the decisions.

As Methodism expanded more and more the Bishop's efforts were given to preparation and conducting the various conferences from the Annual to the General Conferences. Many of the administrative duties Asbury has omitted from his journal. One, which was of great historical significance, was his suggestion of a congratulatory address to the Annual Conference meeting in New York and its delivery, along with Bishop Coke, to President George Washington on his inauguration on April 30, 1789.[3]

In 1795 Asbury was named executor for the estate of the late P.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (November 27, 1785), I, 503.

[2] Ibid., (January 21, 1796), II, 289.

[3] Ezra Squier Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1904), pp. 278-280.

Davies Stephen who had left the first bequest to the Methodist Church in America.[1]

At the turn of the century Asbury is seen more and more traveling from one Conference to the next, until in 1795 he is traveling some fifteen hundred miles, which had taken him through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. The General Conference of 1808 saw the need of assisting the Bishop in his administrative office and elected Rev. McKendree as associate Bishop.

The numerous administrative functions in the later years of his ministry limited the area of his pastoral work. He was heard occasionally to complain but it was with great reluctance that he relinquished his responsibilities to his associate bishop.

3. VISITATION OF THE SICK

One of the basic concerns of Asbury's ministry was the command of the Master to visit the sick. From the numerous entries in Asbury's Journal relating to the sick and his work with the sick, it can be seen that Asbury considered visitation to the afflicted an important part of his pastoral role.

i. The Place of Pastoral Visitation.

Asbury, in the writing of his journals, has noted those calls which stood out in his memory and seemed most important to him as a pastor.

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[1] Tipple, *The Heart of Asbury's Journal*, p. 404.

The frequency of a given type of entry was not of statistical significance for Asbury was not writing as one arguing for a certain method or practice. The entries when considered for their emotional content give a sense of the importance of the ministry to the sick in the relationship to the Bishop's numerous other activities.

Asbury felt that he as a Christian clergyman had a definite place in the sickroom, one that could not properly be filled by any other person. He believed that as a minister he could bring courage and confidence. He could guide the patient in his search for eternal salvation and assist him in his confession to God.

The necessity of the minister's presence in the sickroom can be noted in a number of journal entries. The following entry is subject to two interpretations yet both conveying a sense of the importance of the visitation of the sick. On January 30, 1774 Asbury writes:

> We appointed our next quarterly meeting to be held in Baltimore on the first of May next. Much fatigued in my feeble frame by various exercises, I returned to town, and visited Mrs. Moore, who was afflicted in body and distressed in mind.[1]

Mr. Clark sheds some insight on this entry in his notes by relating that Asbury was at this time attending a meeting at the home of Richard Owings in the outlying suburbs of Baltimore.[2] For the previous two weeks Asbury had been confined to his bed for days at a time. He was also suffering from a pain in his head which was finally relieved by the forming of a blister under his ear. During this period of time Asbury continued his numerous pastoral activities as much as possible. He was still weak in body when he attended the above mentioned conference at Brother Owings.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (January 30, 1774), The dating of the Journal has been changed by Tipple at this point, Heart of Asbury's Journal, pp. 57-58, without editorial comment. In the Journal this part of the entry is printed under the date of January 30, 1774, Vol. 1, p. 98. While in Tipple's corrected Journal a part of the entry has been omitted and is dated January 31, 1774), I, 98.

[2] Elmer T. Clark, "Incomplete unpublished notes on Asbury's Journal," Vol. 1, December 31, 1773, January, February, 1774.

Asbury returned to Baltimore following the conference and immediately made a call on Mrs. Moore, a sick woman. It is impossible to say with certainty that Asbury returned to Baltimore especially to call upon Mrs. Moore. His return may have resulted from his own desire for peace and quiet and the necessity for a period of personal rest; however, Asbury felt that regardless of his own tired and sick body he should call upon Mrs. Moore. It is just as possible to assume that Asbury felt it necessary for him to return to Baltimore that evening to call on Mrs. Moore, especially in sight of her distressed condition.

The question for Asbury as to when the pastor should be in attendance was largely determined by the concern, "Was there a need?" Asbury compared his pastoral role with that of the physician and considered himself indispensable. He believed the pastor must have the confidence of the parishioner which comes only through the establishment of good rapport. The patient expresses this confidence in his acceptance of the pastor by his willingness to speak of his illness and his spiritual needs.

Personal danger was secondary in the pastoral life of Asbury. The need of his people was sufficient for him to ask entrance where others may have hesitated to go. He records this attitude in his entry of October 10, 1793:

> Came to Baltimore; passed the guard against the plague in Philadelphia, set for prudence, one hundred miles off. O! that plague of sin! Would to God we were more guarded against its baleful influence![1]

Asbury was a minister who saw the needs of his people. He saw man as more than a physical being, but one sick in soul and body. He realized that the sick of body could be sick in soul though the latter was not always considered so seriously. It is suggested in this entry that the pastor had the right to expect entrance in restricted areas when he felt there was a spiritual need. This privilege seems to have been accepted by custom for Asbury gives no evidence that any attempt was made to prevent his entrance. He remained in the region of Greater Baltimore until the twenty-fourth of November. It was during this stay that he received the "happy tidings from John Dickins that he, with his family, had been preserved during the late contagion in the city of Philadelphia."[2]

Asbury ministered to both the spiritual and mental needs of his parishioners. He seemed to draw no line of distinction. The use of words in referring to the emotional state of the "sin-sick soul" makes it difficult to be exact as to the nature of the disturbance in which Asbury is expressing his interest. On January 30, 1774 he called on a lady who was from every appearance mentally disturbed. Asbury refers to the lady as "afflicted in body and distressed in mind."[3] This entry could be considered as relating to a theological distress and containing certain

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 209.

2. Ibid., (November 15, 1793), II, 210.

3. Ibid., I, 98.

emotional overtones. A similar entry, but more specific in its wording, permits further insight on the relationship of the mental and emotional life as seen by Asbury. On March 13, 1776 Asbury says he visited a woman who was suffering from hysterical complaints. He writes: "Came to Joseph Dallam's, and found his pious wife under hysterical complaints and full of doubts about the state of her soul."[1] Asbury is expressing the closeness which exists between mind, body and soul. He notes the fact that she was in some doubt about the condition of her soul and implies that this might have been one of the causal factors in the hysterical condition. The distress of soul and doubts of mind were sufficient to have been facets in the beginning of a mental illness. Into this situation Asbury came as a Christian minister to bring comfort and cure. He did not attempt to ask the nature of her illness and separate it from her spiritual need. It is impossible to know if there would have been a physician available to treat Mrs. Dallam for physical ailment.

From Asbury's records it can be seen that he felt the pastoral call upon the sick should find its place among his many responsibilities; perhaps not the first, but a place of prominence. In one account Asbury lists his duties as: preaching, meeting of the society, the Sacramental function of Baptism, and the visiting of the sick. The sequence of listing is certainly not in order of their importance but more likely according to the chronology of performance in the day's schedule. The important thing to note is the importance to which he held the pastoral visitation of the sickroom in his total pastoral functions.

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 176.

ii. Asbury's Methods in the Sickroom.

The success of a man's ministry is dependent upon his training, his personality, his spiritual life, and his methods. As one reads Asbury's Journals, certain sickroom practices begin to stand out. Asbury is seen as a keen conversationalist and a devout listener. Though Asbury seems to have talked a great deal of the time during many of his visits, it can be rightfully said that he was a sensitive listener. In his listening he had a sympathetic and understanding ear. It can be noted with assurance that during the course of each visit there was offered a pastoral prayer. The most surprising omission in the visit was the apparent lack of scriptural reading. Yet, few journals have ever carried all of an individual's practices or experiences; Asbury's should certainly be considered as no exception. The inclusion of such a notation may not have been thought necessary by the Bishop and still may have been in practice when taken in relationship to the extended use of the Bible in the other areas of his ministry.

(1) As in Conversation. The sickroom was a place where Asbury felt a great sense of the freedom to speak. He liked to talk and on one occasion he mentions how difficult it was for him to remain silent.[1] He was further irked by light and unimportant topics or general conversations about the world.

Asbury's Journal does not include his lengthy conversations but rather short excerpts from somewhat extended discussions. More important to the observer are his summations of the emotional content of these visits.

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[1] Asbury's Journal (February 1, 1779), p. 302.

Some of his sensitivity to the situation can be seen in his remarks concerning a visit to an elderly sick man. During the course of the visit it appears that two men entered the sickroom and remained during the rest of the visit. Their presence resulted in a sense of strain and emotional inhibition. There was something about these men which Asbury did not like, whether it was their looks, their behavior, or their general bearing. Their presence made him feel restrained and he was very hesitant to speak. He says of the visit, "I had some conversation, though not much."[1] It is interesting to notice Asbury's personal reflection upon the visit. He felt a sense of remorse at the thought of having been intimidated by another man. He considered this a weakness and one of his secret faults. The implication is that Asbury felt some self-confinement. The event evidences an aspect of the close sensitivity of the Bishop to his environment and the circumstances of a situation.

There were times when Asbury could talk lightly on general topics of conversation. Such was the occasion in his visit with Mr. O'Kelly, which will be treated more in detail under the next section. Such Journal entries reveals a reflective attitude toward the subjective and emotional content of his conversation. They reveal a man who loved to talk but desired that his conversation be sensible and meaningful.

(2) As the Listener. The pastor has always found it necessary to be a good listener, and this was Asbury's personal experience. Listening permitted his patients to "express" themselves, and assisted the minister in understanding the individual's needs. The insight into individual lives

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (April 11, 1772), p. 27.

reveals how thoroughly Asbury understood his parishioners. Such an extensive understanding could have been gathered only through a careful listening. The unraveling of this growing empathy is understood best as it is seen in the numerous journal entries.

Asbury summarizes his visit of April 13, 1776 in two short sentences. Yet, the content of the remarks reveals an extended visit, for in the course of the conversation Asbury learns that the man he is visiting was an Englishman, an old soldier, and that he was converted some twenty years ago when still living in Ireland. The same sense of listening is seen in his visit of August 12, 1773 in two sentences when he learns that this little woman can, without feet or hands, walk, spin, sew and knit, and through it all rejoices in God. These conversations could not have been the result of a talking Asbury, but must have been rather in a two-way conversation.

When Asbury observes that a woman is rejoicing in God he is expressing a judgment possible only because he was a critical listener. Many of these summary entries could not have been obtained by observation alone but must have, by their nature, been the result of a sensitive listening. On September 13, 1773 Asbury says, "Came to William Lynch's, and found Mr. Lynch in spiritual trouble; but I hope the Lord will soon deliver him."[1] Asbury does not say how he learned of Mr. Lynch's trouble.

It is doubtful if Asbury had a psychological understanding of the value of listening, but he knew that if he were to find the person's personal and spiritual needs he must wait and listen. Asbury had an exhalted sense of the value of preaching but a like feeling for the worth of the individual.

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[1] 1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (September 13, 1772), I, 88.

Cabot and Dicks say that "Great religious leaders of all time have been those who listened to the voice of God on one side and to the voice of the people on the other.[1] They might well have been speaking of Bishop Francis Asbury for he was a devout man who lived among his people.

Asbury's conversation appears to have been wisely directed and restricted to constructive areas. He has omitted in his summaries extended parts of his conversation. This limits the possibility of knowing definitely how Asbury directed the conversation. His record would appear to have included the factual and emotional parts of the interview.

Some of Asbury's calls were exceptional. A notable one occurred on August 23, 1802. To understand the full implications of his visit, we must consider it in view of its circumstances. The visit was that one previously referred to concerning a Rev. James O'Kelly. O'Kelly had formerly been a Methodist pastor under Asbury's supervision. In January, 1790 Mr. O'Kelly came to Bishop Asbury with numerous complaints concerning the power of the Bishop and his arbitrary decisions. Asbury heard these complaints, gave his consideration and promptly rejected them. The controversy was continued from time to time with increasing aggressiveness on both sides until the General Conference of 1792 when Mr. O'Kelly withdrew from the Methodist Church. This controversy has often been referred to as "Asbury's Famous Controversy." With an understanding of this background it is much easier to see some of the underlying emotional tensions with which Asbury approached and conducted the following visit. He made no attempt to call upon Mr. O'Kelly, now very ill, until after he had received an expression of Mr. O'Kelly's desire to have him call. Asbury relates the interview of August 20, 1802 in the following entry:

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[1] Richard C. Cabot and Russell L. Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1946), p. 189.

> Mr. O'Kelly, having been taken ill in town, I sent two of our brethren, Reed and Walls, to see him, by whom I signified to him that if he wished to see me I would wait on him. He desired a visit, which I made him the next day. We met in peace, asked of each other's welfare, talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace.[1]

This was an exception for Asbury to seek the desire of the individual. At times he seemed reluctant to call even where his presence had been actively sought. In all his journal entries this is the only sickroom or pastoral call in which Asbury notes or even implies that as pastor he has sought permission and the interest of the parishioner before making the visit. The entry goes into greater detail concerning the visit than usual and the details may have been thus noted for permanent record.

Special note has been made as to his manner of conversation "talked of persons and things indifferently, prayed, and parted in peace." There would appear to have been little depth of conversation. This may have been the result of the broad area of topics discussed in the course of the conversation with no special subject of prominence. It is more than likely that Asbury was attempting to avoid controversial issues. Both individuals were careful to move from one subject to the next before

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, III, 82.

any one idea reached an emotional pitch. Past controversy left each man reserved and somewhat on the defensive.

This is the only occasion at which Asbury goes at such length in describing his conversation and all the related circumstances. By contrast it can be assumed that in his other sickroom visits Asbury considered his conversation important. On most occasions he felt there was positive growth.

(3) The Use of Prayer. Asbury found prayer the central medium for his assisting the patient toward a recovery in the sickroom. He believed that it was possible to commune with God through his prayers and that God would hear and answer. Many entries in his Journal dealing with the sick or the sickroom do not contain a reference to the use of prayer nor should this have been expected. For Asbury, in writing his Journal, was not trying to prove to later generations that prayer was a necessary part of the sickroom visit. Yet it is possible to interpret his statements and gather certain emotional content that would lead the observer to believe that prayer was a constant and necessary part of every sickroom attendance.

This feeling is most strongly felt in Asbury's reflection on his call of April 11, 1772, "Came away without prayer; and was justly blamed both by my friends and myself."[1] This was no casual reference to an unimportant incident; the visit may have been routine on his pastoral calendar but the reflection is the heart-rending examination of a pastor's conscience. The sickroom prayer, however, should not be considered as a psychological compulsion as it might at first have appeared, for in the colonial period it was an established custom and tradition. To have omitted the prayer was considered as negligent of a pastoral function as to have forgotten one's Bible. Its omission was to solicit criticism. Though its use brought the usual emotional satisfaction found in the psychological compulsion, the depth of its feeling made it a conscious religious instrument for the focusing of the patient's mind on God.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 27.

It can be seen by the above entry that the prayer was not a casual utterance. The depth of reflection upon its omission is sufficient to show that it was given with complete cognizance of its spiritual implications and value. It had not become commonplace through a constant usage.

It can be concluded that prayer was a part of each sickroom visit and yet from the quoted entry it can be seen that Asbury found times when prayer did not seem appropriate. It brings forth the question asked by Russell Dicks, "Do we not use prayer in every instance, even with patients whose religious lives we know well?"[1] Dicks goes on to say that "There are times when we should pray even though the patient's mood does not invite us." It is such a situation in which Asbury seems to have found himself.

Further light is seen in Asbury's own reflection:

> Visited an old man who was sick, with whom I had some conversation, though not much; but came away without prayer; and was justly blamed both by my friends and myself. I would have

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[1] Cabot and Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick, pp. 217-218.

> prayed with him; but two men came in, whose countenances I did not like, and therefore neglected my duty through the fear of man. I have nothing to plead to palliate my omission. It is true, that to introduce prayer among prayerless people is not an easy matter; yet this is no excuse for me. Lord, forgive both my secret and open faults; my failings of omission and commission: help me to have respect to all thy commandments; and to be blameless before thee in all things!"[1]

The emotional content of his reflections is more important than what he has said. There exists a psychological reserve which has prevented his completely expressing himself. He does not say whether the man was reluctant to talk or whether it was a matter in which they had little about which to converse. The entrance of two objectional persons would tend to suggest that the man was not interested in discussing his personal affairs with the minister, especially in the presence of these two visitors. The strangers' demeanor seemed to have been speaking louder than their words. Asbury gives no description of the visitors nor if they had spoken but their presence annoyed him. The emotional disturbance seems to have been so extensive that Asbury felt forced to make a hurried exit. In retrospect he can find no excuse for his actions. For some it may have been excusable to have omitted prayer in the sickroom in the presence of prayerless people, but Asbury would not consider this an excuse for himself. Dicks suggests in such circumstances the strangers should be asked to leave.[2] One could have anticipated such a course of action for Asbury. There is the suggestion of a compensated sense of inferiority in Asbury to which at this time he conceded without any opposition.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 27.

[2] Cabot and Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick, p. 217.

It can be concluded that Asbury felt that under every condition prayer should be offered for sick people, because it was, in his way of thinking, a commandment and for the good of the patient.

There were times when the Bishop was called to the sickroom by the patient. Such an incident happened on July 18, 1774.[1] The description given is sufficient to show that Asbury did not consider her a regular attendant at his Church; he considered her to be a worldly woman who had given herself to men. Now that she was or felt she was about to die she saw the need of a minister's guidance and sent word that she would like to see the Bishop immediately. It is surprising to note that Asbury felt such a reluctance to go, but under a sense of compulsion he attended the woman's needs. The fact that she had called him seems to have made a difference, for he ministers to her spiritual urges without any apparent reserve. He demonstrates no reluctance in speaking frankly with her and in a natural way closes with a prayer.

Asbury assumes the role of the minister in the use of prayer as designated by Dicks.[2] His position in a sense was secondary; he stood at the side of the bed as the representative of God, fastening man's attention to the Divine. Since Asbury records none of his sickroom prayers, it is necessary to gather the nature of their content from summary statements. Many of these statements are too restrictive to make it possible to gather a full and accurate outline of the ways in which the prayer was used. At best only certain inferred possibilities can be assumed and tentative conclusions drawn.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 49.

[2] Cabot and Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick, p. 215.

His first use of prayer was in the more general way and almost as a benediction and leave-taking from the sickroom. It was best illustrated in the visit to Mr. O'Kelly.[1] The tone of this visit was one of caution, the topic of conversation was general, and the emotional content carefully indifferent. He says, "Prayed, and parted in peace." The prayer would have appeared to have come at the conclusion of the visit. No mention is made of the nature of the prayer nor its content. Was it a prayer for Mr. O'Kelly's recovery or a benediction and the asking of God's blessing? There is no way of knowing. The tenor of the prayer can be deduced only from the trend of the conversation and its location in reference to the total visit.

A somewhat more explanatory prayer was to be seen in his visit of July 18, 1774.[2] This young woman had asked Asbury to call on her for she was of the feeling that she was at the point of death. Her background was not of a religious nature and Asbury spent some time preparing her mind and soul for approaching death. In the preparation he was also bringing her into harmony for prayer. The prayer like all real prayer was directed to God. As far as the woman was concerned, her presence was secondary. Asbury was speaking to God in her behalf. He was interceding for her, asking God to forgive her many wrong doings. We cannot know the specific nature of his prayer. There is no certainty as to whether he was praying solely for her salvation or for her recovery. The trend of Asbury's emphasis in his ministry would permit a safe assumption that he was praying first for her salvation and secondly for her physical recovery. However, it should be noted that the prayer could have been expected to have followed the trend of the pre-prayer conversation which dwelt largely with her wayward life and the danger of her soul.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (August 20, 1802), III, 82.

[2] Ibid., I, 119.

Asbury's prayer in the sickroom grew out of his daily prayer life. It was not an uncommon practice for Asbury to arise between four and five o'clock in the morning for prayer. On June 15, 1780 he says, "I see the need of returning to my twelve times of prayer."[1] Thus with this background of devotion it was natural and easy for Asbury to bring his patient into the receptive mood of prayer until the person felt that prayer to God would bring relief.

4. VISITATION OF THE SHUT-IN

The extensive recording of journal entries by Asbury of visits to the sick leaves little room for doubt but that such calling was considered a regular part of his pastoral responsibilities. In harmony with his sick visitation it could have been considered as appropriate for him to have made regular visits to those who were shut-ins, the chronically ill, aged, and handicapped of his constituency.

His entry of January 17, 1797 tells of continued visitations on a chronically ill man. It appears that Brother Wells would have liked Asbury to have called even more often but Asbury says, "I visited him every day I could with propriety."[2] Thus, this suggested that according to Asbury's code of pastoral duties there is a certain sense of frequency of visitation and oftener than that was not fitting and proper. Asbury does not state specifically the proper frequency of such calling. He calls attention to the question and leaves the final decision to the individual pastor.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 376.

[2] Ibid., II, 330.

It is impossible to establish with any certainty a continuum of visitation on the shut-ins and handicapped. He did not, however, neglect this aspect of his ministry as is seen in the following entries:

> Visited E. T. and saw his father, who is a hundred years old, or more. He had lately lost his wife, who was younger than he; and in her he lost his nurse and earthly comfort.[1]
>
> Saw a little woman with neither hands nor feet; yet she could walk, card, spin, sew, and knit. And her heart rejoiced in God.[2]

If other visits were made to these homes as he continued on his rounds from time to time, he does not consider them of sufficient importance to make note of them in his Journal. In the first entry there is a feeling of familiarity, as if he were personally acquainted with the family and may have been in the home on a number of occasions. This need not have been true, however, in the light of the close fellowship of understanding existing in the class meetings which Asbury visited as a matter of custom on his regular rounds.

It could tentatively be assumed from a lack of internal Journal evidence that it was not Asbury's custom to make regular visits on shut-ins unless specifically requested by the family or the individual. The calling on the family would have more generally been for an immediate sickness or a specific need, with the general house-to-house calling as time permitted. If regular visits were made to the shut-ins of the parish it can be assumed that it was a part of the work of the local members or leaders of the class meeting.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (April 12, 1772), I, 28.

[2] Ibid., (August 2, 1773), p. 84.

5. PASTORAL CARE OF THE PRISONERS

The frequency with which Asbury called upon the imprisoned man would suggest that he felt a sense of obligation for his spiritual and physical welfare. What was Asbury's felt responsibility? Did he attend the needs of all the prisoners or were there certain kinds of crimes for which he felt a closer kinship? What were his pastoral methods?

From the time of Jesus it has been the moral obligation of the Christian to call upon the imprisoned, to speak to his spiritual needs and attempt as far as possible to bring him into harmony with both his Maker and his fellowman. The emphasis has varied from time to time so that it is important for the pastoral psychologist to observe the work of the past for historical insights for the present.

i. The Psychological Needs of the Colonial Prisoner.

As general pastor Asbury would have called on the members, as far as his time permitted, who were imprisoned. Such members, however, were small in number because of the rigid standards of the society. One such person is mentioned by Asbury on October 14, 1784:

> We went on to Cambridge. Here George, a poor negro in our society, we found under sentence of death for theft committed before he became a Methodist; he appeared to be much given up to God; he was reprieved under the gallows; a merchant, who

cursed the negro for praying, died in horror.[1]

This member had committed the theft before he had become a member of the Methodist fellowship and this appears to have altered his life. Asbury refers to the man as George, a poor negro. The role of the pastor in the final reprieve has not been explained but is implied. It would appear that Asbury played an important part in having the society member reprieved at the last minute as he was at the gallows. A merchant was also hanged at the same time. Asbury noted his presence but does not seem to have spoken to him about his soul. It may have been the pastor's feeling that if this man would curse his member for praying there would appear little hope in his changing through the mere use of words.

Asbury went beyond the confines of his own parish in his calling upon the prisoners. On May 7, 1772 Asbury says, "Visited some prisoners; and one of them, who is to be tried for his life, seemed much affected."[2] No reference is made as to how Asbury became acquainted with these men; they were in all probability not members of his society. In this instance he is calling on prisoners not yet brought to trial. One was to be tried for his life, but the others were to be tried on lesser charges. It should be noted that even in this instance where he is making a general pastoral visit to the prison, his concern continues to be with the member of the groups who will shortly be facing death.

The general pattern of visitation was one of visiting those under sentence of death in order that they might make their peace with God. A few cases in point would be:

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 482.

2. Ibid., I, 30.

> Went to the jail, and visited a condemned criminal, and preached to him and others with some tender feeling of mind, on these words, 'Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth.'[1]
>
> Was desired to attend the execution of the prisoners at Chester, and J. K. went with me. We found them penitent; and two of the four obtained peace with God, and seemed thankful. I preached with liberty to a great number of people under the jail wall. The sheriff was friendly and and very kind. J. K. preached at the gallows to a vast multitude; after which I prayed with them. The executioner pretended to tie them all up, but only tied one, and let the rest fall. One of them was a young man about fifteen; we saw them all afterward, and exhorted them to be careful. We returned to Philadelphia the same night, and I gave an exhortation.[2]
>
> Found myself very unwell in the morning; but visited a prisoner under sentence of death, and strove much to fasten conviction on his heart. Through the mercy of God, I hope the poor man was humbled.[3]
>
> Set off (from Philadelphia) in the stage for Bristol (Pa.) and crossed the water to see a man suspected of murder; but found him very ignorant of things relating to his soul: I then returned to Philadelphia very unwell.[4]
>
> Went to Burlington, in order to attend the execution of one S., a murderer; and declared to a great number of people under the jail wall.[5]
>
> I returned to Philadelphia, where there were five criminals hanged; one of them professed conversion.[6]

Thus is seen a pastoral emphasis on the condemned criminal. Attention to other prisoners became a part of the general visit.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 24.

[2] Ibid., (April 30, 1772), p. 29.

[3] Ibid., (May 26, 1772), p. 31.

[4] Ibid., (June 11, 1772), p. 331.

[5] Ibid., (July 4, 1772), p. 35.

[6] Ibid., (October 12, 1789), II, 62.

ii. Methods in Prison Visitation.

How did the pastor conduct himself in the presence of the prisoner and what was his purpose for the visit? Asbury answers the former question as to his methods in some of the previously quoted entries. The purpose behind the visit always fashions the conduct within the visit itself. Asbury had a dual purpose in most of his calls at the scene of a hanging. The first and foremost was in the interest of the spiritual well being of the criminal, the second was the spiritual transformation of the audience assembled. At almost every instance Asbury calls special attention to the vast crowd assembled to observe the execution, whether it be April 30, 1772 or three months later on July 4th.

The sheriff and community appear to have accepted the fact that it was the right of the pastor to be present with the prisoner at an execution. In most cases mentioned by Asbury the sheriff was friendly and kind. Upon arrival at the prison Asbury went directly to the prisoner. He listened to what the prisoner had to say, while in the meantime he observed his personal bearing. A proud and haughty attitude among the condemned seemed to have been common. Asbury says of the prisoner visited on May 26, 1772, "I hope the poor man was humbled."

This listening and observing were but the preliminaries during which time Asbury was making mental analysis of his prisoner. When he felt he had come to an understanding of the prisoner's needs, he proceeded to talk to him concerning his spiritual life, or as Asbury put it: "Strove to fasten conviction on his heart." Asbury spoke with sympathy for the prisoner but directly to his spiritual need for repentance. His usual approach seems to have been face to face in the prison cell.

On at least one occasion he found his prisoner unreceptive and preached to him from beneath the prison wall. The value of such preaching would seem to have been in doubt for Asbury says, "When he came forth he roared like a bull in a net. He looked on every side, and shrieked for help; but all in vain. O, how awful! Die he must--I fear, unprepared."[1]

Mr. Clark notes that this was Asbury's second visit to the prisoner.[2] While in Burlington on the previous Tuesday Asbury had called on this prisoner and found him resentful and aggressive. Asbury did not accept defeat but made one last effort to save the man's soul and bring him peace.

In the face of this rebuff Asbury felt the necessity of returning and when he could not gain the necessary rapport to enter the prison cell he preached to the prisoner from beneath the prison window. Asbury recognized the unfruitfulness of such indirect methods for he continues by saying: "How difficult it is--if I may use the term--to drench a hardened sinner with religion! I saw him tied up; and then, stepping on a wagon, I spoke a word in season, and warned the people to flee from the wrath to come."

Thus Asbury's attention was rightfully upon the condemned prisoner and then on the assembled crowd. How often Asbury went beyond the spiritual needs of the prisoner cannot be determined. In a number of instances it would appear that he had a definite influence upon the prisoner being freed. One of these instances is the previously quoted entry of April 30, 1772 in which there is seen a friendly and kind-hearted sheriff and an executioner who pretends to tie up the prisoners and then lets them fall to freedom. The direct connection is not seen in the entry itself but is there by implication. Following the freeing Asbury and John King, his companion, exhort the prisoners to go on their way but to be more careful as to their conduct. On this occasion only one of the four was actually executed.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (May 29, 1772), I, 31.

[2] Clark, "Unpublished notes," Vol. 1, item 5, May 20, 1772.

The case of the poor negro Methodist, who received a reprieve on October 14, 1784, seems to have been the beneficiary of either Asbury directly or the labors of the society through Asbury.[1] If his release came through regular legal channels it would have required extended efforts. The release of the prisoners by the executioner appears to have been the result of an on-the-spot decision by the authorities present.

Asbury gave his attention first to the prisoner and when he had exhausted all possibilities of converting the prisoner, he then turned to the vast assembled audience. The execution seems to have been an object of curiosity. At the appropriate moment when there was a high empathic relationship existing between the state of the condemned prisoner and the audience, Asbury would stand to preach and remind the people of their own sins.

Asbury could thus have been said to have felt a keen responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the condemned criminal and in a limited number of instances to have gone so far as to have sought his reprieve. His methods may not have been in harmony with the modern practices in counseling with prisoners, especially after his having received insight into the prisoner's needs, but his end goal was the same emotional adjustment of the ego with the super-ego through repentance and forgiveness.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 482.

6. THE FUNERAL

A part of the pastor's multiple ministry is his work with the bereaved. The funeral service, therefore, tends to reveal some of the insight of Asbury into the psychological needs of his people and the practices common to his period. Through Journal entries it is possible to gather in part the funeral customs common in this colonial period and the psychological intent of the service itself.

i. The Place of the Funeral Service.

It was common in the early American colonial era to have the funeral service performed by a minister at the time of the death whenever feasible, otherwise on his arrival in the regular rounds of his circuit. Asbury felt it expedient that he visit the family of the bereaved at the time of the death. He notes this on March 2, 1780 when he says, "Heard of Mr. Peterkin's death; he died last night; I came to his house."[1] It is impossible to determine the exact length of time spent with the bereaved family, but it was certainly not an extended visit. The funeral service was generally appointed for the next day following the death.

Late afternoon or evening funerals appear to have been the generally established practice in this colonial period. The explanation for the lateness of the hours, which in many instances seems to have been four o'clock even during the month of January, was for the convenience of the family and friends who had great distances to travel on rough and difficult wagon trails. The service itself was held either in a home, the church, or in some instances, due to the size of the attending number of mourners, it was held in the barn. A minister's funeral service was almost always held in the local church or the central church of his circuit. It seems to have been a policy to have the Conference designate the preacher who was to hold the service of a brother minister. The formality of such a practice is seen in Asbury's entry of April 19, 1801:

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 353.

> There had been put forth a printed appointment for me to preach the funeral sermon of the late Rev. Devereux Jarratt, who had lately returned to his rest. My subject was Matt. 25:21; 'His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant.'[1]

A similar request was made of Asbury by the Conference on September 20, 1806 for the service of Rev. Whatcoat. This is revealed in Asbury's wording of his entry, "Who had lately returned to his rest." The passing of Bishop Coke was cause for another memorial service ordered by the Conference with Asbury directed to deliver the message.

A less formal practice and yet an established custom was that of holding the service on the arrival of the preacher in the form of a memorial service. An illustration of this was on the passing of General Hardy Bryan:

> Crossed Neuse River, at Smith's Ferry, and came to the dwelling of the late General Hardy Bryan-a man I had often heard of, and wished to see; but death, swift and sudden, reached the house

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, III, 21.

> before me. His son H- died the eighteenth of last November; his daughter Mary, December twenty-eighth; and himself, the tenth instant: each of them feared the Lord, and were happy souls. I felt strangely unwilling to believe the general was dead, until I could no longer doubt it: at the graveyard I had very solemn feelings--there was some melting among the people whilst I enlarged on Psa. 12:1.[1]

From the words of Asbury it would be impossible to be certain whether there was a service at the hour of interment, but if such a service was performed it was undoubtedly by a member of the local congregation. In this instance Asbury had never met the General but knew him by reputation. Asbury had anticipated meeting the General and this anticipation created in him a psychological block preventing his conscious recognition of the actual reality of the death. It was only when he was personally able to stand at the side of the grave that Asbury accepted this reality. Such grave-side services were practiced on the arrival of the minister. The memorial service could be held at the grave or at the church. The more formal services were regularly scheduled in the church while the more or less spontaneous services occurred at the grave-side.

ii. The Psychological Value of the Funeral Service.

There are two sources for the hidden content of the underlying purposes of the funeral service. The first is revealed indirectly in the actual and emotional content of the entries themselves and the second in the type and meaning of the selected sermon texts.

The full intent of the colonial funeral service was for the consolation of the living rather than of any service, spiritual or physical, for the deceased. At times there was woven into the service a form of indirect and occasionally a direct eulogy of the deceased. Such practice was most common in services held for ministers. In the case of Rev. Jarratt, Asbury selected that verse of commendation, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."[1] The selection for Rev. [illegible]nnell was "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."[2] The remarks were ones of praise for their faithful lives as Christian ministers. Similar remarks were offered in the case of godly men and women of whom Asbury was personally acquainted.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, (January 22, 1791), II, 106.

(1) The Eulogizing Sermon. The funeral sermons preached by Francis Asbury can be divided into two psychological classifications: the sermon of Eulogy, and the sermon of Argument. The eulogizing sermon served a dual purpose. It gave the minister an opportunity to speak of the good deeds of the deceased and at the same time to bring an atmosphere of comfort to the mourners who were grieving over their personal loss. In Asbury's sermon for Rev. Whatcoat he weaves together those indirect words of praise, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

There was often a gradual transition from a eulogy of the deceased to a promise of hope both for the deceased and for the living. Such an emotional movement is to be seen in the service of April 19, 1801 in which the text chosen reveals this spirit: Matthew 25:21,

> His Lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (April 19, 1801), III, 21.

[2] Ibid., (July 10, 1790), II, 90.

> make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of the Lord.[1]

The text reveals the outline for the sermon, the expounding on the goodness of the deceased, and the eventual reward for his deeds which is a promise to him and to all men.

(2) The Argumentative Sermon. The second form of sermon used commonly by Mr. Asbury was the argumentative type of sermon. It was in general use at the services of all nominal Christians and non-Christians. Its content and selection of scripture varied. There was the direct warning of the awful judgment to come. In doctrinal sermon there was the presentation of the justification that the righteous must die.

The explanation of the death of the righteous is seen in the sermon of March 12, 1773 in which Asbury used Isaiah 57:1, 2 as his supporting text.

> The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart; and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace: they shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness.[2]

The outline of the sermon can be derived from the text as: 1. The righteous man will perish. 2. His perishing is often not considered in its proper light for in reality God is merciful and is saving his child from the evil that has not yet been seen. 3. His dying is not his destruction but another period of eternal peace.

Such progression is found in Asbury's selection of texts. The verification of such an assumption is revealed in Asbury's own outline as recorded in the entry of October 24, 1779:

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (April 19, 1801), III, 21.

[2] Ibid., (March 12, 1773), I, 65.

> This day was appointed for Mrs. Jessop's funeral. There were about three hundred people; we had the use of the barn. I spoke with great opening, on Heb. 9: 27; was much assisted in showing to my hearers; 1. What it is to die; 2. The judgment, with the certain consequences of both; 3. The appointment for all men once to die; and controverted the argument against being saved from sin, drawn from death--that it is not a punishment to the righteous; that their constitutions being subject to decay makes it necessary, and in imitation of Christ, to suffer as he did in death, without sin.[1]

It would appear that Mrs. Jessop, for whom the funeral service was offered by Francis Asbury, was a Christian woman perhaps, but not necessarily a member of the Methodist fellowship and only casually known by Asbury. This is gathered by a comparison of the texts used by Asbury in other funeral services. The closer the connection of Asbury with the deceased the more eulogy played in the selection of his scriptural text. As Asbury found less and less personal involvement with the deceased the more he tended to use the occasion to circumvent false doctrines.

In the outline of October 24, 1779 there appear to have been two prevailing false doctrines: the first, that death was a form of punishment, and the second, that the person who was saved from sin was also saved from the punishment found in death. The occasion was used to argue that death was in no way a punishment but that all men had a time to die according to God's plan. Asbury continued to expand the same thought; if death was not a punishment, it must be a necessity for all men to die. Death was a part of God's plan, since the very nature of our physical bodies was to decay. He supported these two doctrines by the example of Christ who not only died but suffered in his death and yet he was one without sin.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (October 24, 1779), I, 332.

iii. The Religious Value through the Release of Grief.

There is little if any evidence to support a theory that Asbury was conscious of the need to relieve the relatives of the deceased of any sense of emotional grief. Indirectly he may have attempted to have accomplished the same results through a conscious effort on his part to bring them under conviction and through the search for forgiveness relieve them of any conscious or unconscious remorse or guilt feelings. The motivating factors were not conceived in the terms of the modern pastoral psychologist but in the role of the colonial evangelist bringing man into a face-to-face relationship with his God.

Grief in this colonial period found its release through the shedding of tears, the search for forgiveness, and the acceptance of religious promises extended through Jesus.

7. PASTORAL COUNSELING

A large portion of Francis Asbury's time was given to interviewing, and changing the attitudes of individuals through his face-to-face contacts. It is not likely that he thought of his role in the terms of the psychologist nor even as a counselor, but as their pastor. It was his approach and attitude toward his parishioner that makes the study of his journals rich in historical insight for the pastoral psycholgist. Carl Rogers has stated the need for this study when he says, "If in his work he deals with individuals who are maladjusted, or perplexed, or failing, or delinquent, and if they leave their interviews with him somewhat better adjusted to their problems, facing the realities of life more constructively, then his techniques and methods are of interest to us."[1]

Asbury may have attached different names to his pastoral processes. He did not classify his tasks into restricted areas and label this process of counseling "psychotherapy." Many of his terms such as preached, talked, lectured, and conversed were used more or less interchangeably in his journal and it is necessary to determine exactly what was taking place in each dynamic situation.

i. Goals in Counseling.

A careful examination of journal entries reveals that Mr. Asbury and his parishioner did not always possess a common goal as they entered a conversation. At times these aims seemed to have changed and on other occasions there continued to remain a sharp conflict of purpose. It is, therefore, necessary that the goals of the counseling process be considered from the point of view of the counselor and of the counselee.

(1) Goals for the Counselor. Bishop Asbury had one paramount thought in mind, that was, the aligning of the individual with the higher spiritual goals of life. Such goals are reflected in his statements:

> It was my intention to reprove him.[2]
>
> I found it my duty to talk to him and show him his danger.[3]
>
> I advised him to be diligent and faithful and so left him.[4]

Asbury never forgot that he was a pastor and a representative of God.

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[1] Carl R. Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), p. 3.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (October 19, 1772), I, 47.

[3] Ibid., (November 19, 1772), I, 51.

[4] Ibid., (March 30, 1779), I, 307.

With this knowledge of his basic philosophy it is possible to interpret his conversations with a more understanding perception.

Asbury's counseling was not limited to the spiritual realm. It ranged from legal affairs to pre-marital and family conflicts. In most cases he had, at least in his own thinking, what he considered the best solution for the situation. He did not press these ideas many times. Occasionally there is given the impression that Asbury went to considerable lengths in convincing his counselee that what he was suggesting was proper and correct. His conversation with the widow Tribulet, which was over a riot in her house for which Asbury recommends legal redress, reveals some of the directness of the presentation of his goals in a given situation.[1]

(2) Goals for the Counselee. The goals of the counselee often ended with a remarkable degree of harmony with those of Asbury. The friendliness of his personality added to his charm as a counselor. There were instances where the counselee seemed to have continued in conflict with Asbury's pre-determined goals. On one occasion he tries to persuade a member of the fellowship into delaying his marriage. Again on June 29, 1789 an Adam Cloud, once a preacher with the Methodists, comes to Asbury seeking payment for his services. Asbury feels that there is no just need for payment, but after a lengthy conversation he agrees to settle for a lump sum. Our greatest contrast of goals existed in the area of spiritual counseling. In fact, many modern counselors would hesitate to concede that there existed a counseling situation because of the lack of interest on the

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (February 7, 1774), I, 99.

part of the counselee in bringing about a change in his moral life. In such instances Asbury was guilty of imposing his counsel on the individual contrary to his will. Asbury, in remarking on his spiritual missions, says, "I feel happy in speaking to all I find, whether parents, children, or servants; I see no other way; the common names will not do; Baxter, Wesley and our Form of Discipline, say, 'Go into every house.'"[1]

Such an attitude made it inevitable that many of the face-to-face situations in which Asbury became engaged should develop into a contrast of goals between the counselor and his counselee. The success of Asbury's counseling is evidenced in the extended number of instances where the goals of the counselee were brought into reasonable harmony with the predetermined goals of the counselor.

ii. Methods in Counseling.

To begin a study of a pastor's methods it is necessary to limit the area of activity to be considered as counseling. This may best be accomplished by adapting the definition of Seward Hiltner in order that it will fit the situation about to be examined. Pastoral Counseling for the present study shall be defined as "the dynamic process existing between two persons in a face-to-face relationship where a person recognizes a need, knows some of it is in himself, directly or indirectly seeks help in understanding it, and senses that the pastor's job is to help him help himself."[2] This definition will permit this study to include many of the person-to-person situations which some psychologists would otherwise have ruled out. For instance, the definition of Carl Rogers is too limited in its historical perspective to have permitted such a study as is now being undertaken. Rogers says, "Counseling consists of a definitely structured, permissive relationship . . . "[1] Such a definition does not take into consideration that process of relationship which has always existed between pastor and parishioner and which, though not yet defined in the minds of the minister of past generations, was still a counseling activity between one who seeks and one who helps.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (May 24, 1795), II, 266.

[2] Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury, 1948), p. 94.

Francis Asbury did not give thought to the theoretical formulations of the various schools of thought not yet existent. The focus of attention should therefore be upon the inherent counseling processes involved. The kind of counseling most prevalent in the colonial period could be termed what Hiltner calls "Brief Counseling."[2] This counseling process may exist between two people from one to a half a dozen interviews. The length of the counseling procedure was limited by the circuit system in use during this colonial period. The pastor normally remained in a village a day or at most a week before moving on to his next preaching place.

The great bulk of the counseling work of Francis Asbury could therefore be said to have been an attempt by a pastor to help a person turn a corner through insight and understanding.

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1. Carl R. Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy, p. 18.

2. Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, p. 81.

(1) Counseling through Individual Preaching. This at first will seem a confusion of terms, for ordinarily preaching is not conceived as a counseling process in the more restricted sense. Yet, when an individual receives the visiting minister and recognizes his own need and comes to realize that the minister can help him either directly or indirectly, there develops a changing relationship.

The steps in such a relationship could be listed as: A recognition of the pastor in the "father role" by the parishioner, the presence of a well-established rapport, a consciousness on the part of the pastor of a need existing in the parishioner and some awareness of this need by the counselee but in varying degrees, and a decision by the counselee to cooperate at least to the point of listening. The dynamic quality of such a relationship will depend to a large extent upon the measure of rapport existing between the counselor and his counselee and the acceptance of the father role, consciously or unconsciously, by the pastor.

The difference between directive counseling and individual preaching is seen in the attitude of the pastor. In both instances the pastor feels that he knows what is best for the counselee. When the pastor accepts the preaching role, it is assumed that he has either listened to a statement of the situation by the parishioner or believes he thoroughly understands the problems involved and is ready to lay down the treatment in what Asbury called "plain and patient talk."

Asbury recognized this method of counseling through individual preaching. How successful was the practice cannot be known. Asbury must have felt it was accomplishing some good purpose or he would not have used it so frequently. Acceptance on the part of the parishioner was reflected by Asbury from his observation which he notes in his journal entry of November 2, 1783:

> I missed my road, and stopped at a poor man's house; so poor that the furniture within was not, perhaps, worth twenty shillings; the woman listened to me with great attention while I spoke to her about her soul.[1]

Nothing more is said of the woman so that it is impossible to see the effect of the conversation in a follow-up. There is, however, at least as far as Asbury was concerned, a sense of acceptance of what he was offering her. The reception of such preaching is found in the response of a young man reproved by Asbury for being overly profane during one of his meetings. Asbury recognized some of the conditions necessary for good counseling and waited on this occasion until he had an opportunity to speak to the young man alone. In the course of the conversation that followed Asbury told the young fellow how he was grieved by his actions at the meeting and Asbury observes, "He received the admonition very well; and excused himself by saying, he did not think of what he was doing."[2] Such a response reflects an acceptance of the criticism and a willingness to change his actions.

Asbury appears to have recognized the weakness of this form of counseling and used it as a final measure. On March 13, 1785 he came to Kingstree to a Mr. Durant's home. He had heard that this Mr. Durant was a Methodist but in the course of his conversation realized that he was a follower of Mr. Hervey who had not attained the enjoyment of a religious life.

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (November 2, 1783), I, 466.

2. Ibid., (October 19, 1772), I, 47.

Asbury seems to have used every available means to bring this man to an insight of the Christian way and in desperation gives him a final lecture and leaves.[1] He has here assumed the fatherly role in his pastoral relationship, a position which he recognizes as necessary in the work of the minister. On another occasion he tells the man that he is there speaking to him not of his own choice but infers that he is under Divine orders. The counseling relationship in this interview was broken by a rejection of the offered advice and saying of the man, "He did not desire me to trouble myself about his soul."[2]

The psychological facet that characterizes this form of counseling is the conscious recognition by the pastor of what is taking place in so far as the minister is concerned. The insight into the projected response of the parishioner seemed somewhat more uncertain and at times almost a matter of indifference to the pastor. To say that this was an indifference is perhaps being a little unfair and it might be better to say that the pastor has come to a point of resignation and is clearing his own ego of guilt feelings in relationship to his own felt responsibility.

The counseling through individual preaching was commonly used by Bishop Asbury, but with a recognition of its many weaknesses and as a final attempt to reach his parishioner.

(2) Directive Counseling. In considering Asbury from the point of a directive counselor, it is necessary to define the dynamics commonly

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (March 13, 1785), I, 493.

2. Ibid., (April 13, 1790), II, 80.

considered in such a process. For this study Carl Roger's definition of directive counseling seems best suited as "the counselor who discovers, diagnoses, and treats the client's problems, provided that the counselee gives his active cooperation in the procedure."[1] There were times in Asbury's pastoral counseling when he seemed to have assumed this role of the directive counselor. He willingly accepted the major responsibility for solving the problems involved, and directed the approach toward what he considered the best and most realistic solution.

The interview is characterized by direct and leading questions such as that asked by Asbury of Charles White on May 13, 1790: "When about to part, I asked him if he loved God."[2] On such occasions when Asbury proceeded in the use of directive counseling, he tactfully assumed the task of directing the conversation early in the contact. The most striking illustration is seen on the day of October 6, 1772, when after preaching the evening sermon he went directly to one of his stewards whose conduct he heard was not altogether proper; the conversation noted before is as follows:

> After preaching at night with some power, I spoke to our steward, whose conduct did not altogether please me--frequently avoiding to speak to me--absenting himself from the meeting of the leaders--the appearance of dissimulation--opposing our rules--and consulting persons who were not members of our society. He appeared to be somewhat affected by the conversation.[3]

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[1] Carl Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy, p. 115.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, II, 84.

[3] Ibid., I, 45.

The conversation was not wholly one-sided and the steward appears to have had the opportunity to have stated his position in the matter, but there is the feeling that this was a counseling situation created and directed by the counselor. The primary role of the counselee was the decision as to his willingness to cooperate, otherwise the direction of the interview was entirely in the hands of Asbury.

The use of the directive method was not limited to those instances where the counselee sought out Asbury for specific advice. There were times when Asbury went out of his way to speak to a person. On one occasion he saw an African across in the middle of a field and went out as far as a stone wall would permit him and there gave the man some direct counsel. Asbury, himself, observes: "Poor creature! he seemed struck at my counsel."[1] It is one of the times when directive counseling moves almost beyond the bounds of counseling. Yet, even though the man was somewhat surprised and startled at the direct advice being offered, he received it freely. The position of the colonial minister and the respect in which he was held is the only possible explanation for the favorable response with which such advice was received.

As a directive counselor Asbury often found it necessary to convince his counselee that what he was advising was for the man's own good. Asbury says of his advice to Brother Hartley concerning the delaying of his marriage until after he was released from prison, that it was necessary for Asbury to persuade him.[2]

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (September 18, 1797), II, 349.

[2] *Ibid.*, (September 14, 1779), I, 325.

Often direct advice was used in a manner of summation in which Asbury seems to have gathered all the important aspects of the interview, then he drew a concise summary and made positive recommendations for immediate action. In spite of the weight of Asbury's prestige his directive counseling was often rejected. He laments such a reaction on May 24, 1802 when he says, "Nothing would serve, but I must marry Thomas Morrell to a young woman."[1]

The basic difference between Asbury's counseling through individual preaching and his directive counseling was in the nature of the emotional and spiritual content of the interview. In the preaching interview Asbury felt his role was one of divine direction in which he was speaking as a pastor with a spiritual commission. In the directive counseling there was not the urge and the drive to make the parishioner conform with the counselor's objectives. It was the presence of this conscious and sometimes sub-conscious urge for alignment that tended to create the counter resistance and brought the interview to an immediate termination. Asbury does not seem to recognize this psychological factor at work and it may not have been as strong as it would appear. In many instances Asbury may have been ready to have taken his leave and felt this last word of advise necessary, but in any case it seems to have been a general pattern in that it brought the interview to a close.

(3) Listening in Counseling. Up to now it would appear that Asbury did most of the talking when with a parishioner. This was far from the truth. Asbury admits, however, that it was difficult for him to keep quiet and permit

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, III, 67.

others to speak. He says:

> It is very difficult for me to check my rapid flow of spirits when in company with my friends. The tongue is an unruly member; He that can on all occasions govern his tongue, will have power sufficient to keep his whole body in religious subjection.[1]

Such was the importance with which Asbury considered one's ability to listen to what another had to say. This in part could be considered as Asbury's basic theory in counseling. He would have agreed with Rogers in so far that in order to learn the important issues in a man's life, the counselor must listen until the pattern of a client's feelings have been expressed.[2] Asbury, in his previously quoted statement of September 14, 1779, is thinking at least in part introspectively. In controlling the counseling situation in the inter-relationship of the interview, the counselor who has sufficient control of the incident to direct his own emotional responses is likely to have the presence of mind to sense the emotional content expressed by the counselee. Hiltner suggests that this principle is the easiest to grasp but the most difficult to apply.[3]

Though Asbury did not apply the theory in the framework of his pastoral psychology, he conceived of this basic principle as the ideal toward which the minister should be striving. For a man such as Asbury, who loved people and enjoyed conversing, this intangible aspect of the counseling relationship became doubly difficult. Asbury wrote this concept into his journal and thereby suggested it as the ideal for the ministers to follow, but admits that he himself had never attained it in any marked degree. Carroll Wise has perhaps come the nearest to touching the real secret of Asbury's apparent weakness at this point and yet explains his recorded success when he says, "One may understand intellectually what is needed but finds himself creating an entirely different relationship because of the dynamics of his own personality."[1] No truer statement could have been made of Asbury even if it has been a reflection of his experience. Asbury had the understanding of what was needed to make a good counselor from a theoretical point of view but had a personality which altered the intrinsic dynamics in the given situation.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (February 1, 1779), I, 302.

[2] Carl R. Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942), p. 131.

[3] Seward Hiltner, The Counselor in Counseling (New York: Abingdon Cokesbury Press, 1952), p. 74.

One of the basic functions of the counseling situation is the giving of support to the ego. The conscious functions of the individual need help in facing what it has hither to been unable to face alone. Counseling is therefore successful to the extent that the counselor can offer this kind of relationship in a framework acceptable to the counselee.

Asbury offered his parishioners a feeling of security. He came to them as a friend and spoke freely and openly with them. In such a relationship they generally talked frankly of their many family troubles. The same basic frankness prevailed even in the area of spiritual counseling.

Asbury received many complaints while serving in his administrative capacity. At times he seemed to feel that it was more than he could accept or bear; it was on these occasions that he seemed to listen but did not hear. Such an approach was far more valuable to the individual than a

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1. Carroll Wise, Pastoral Counseling, p. 39.

refusal to listen to what he had to say or the offering of advice on how to correct the situation.

(4) Dynamic Conversation. There is the danger that the observer will read into Asbury's statements what actually does not exist. There is a similar possibility that modern concepts, perhaps remote in the thinking of Asbury, will be super-imposed in full into Asbury's entries. The fact that these insights are present in Asbury's pastoral work makes the study of great importance. The passing of years, however, has had a way of changing the vocabulary with which the pastor expresses himself. If Asbury were to have been writing in the twentieth century he may have said, "I spend many hours in counseling by day and by night," instead of saying as he does, "Spending many hours in conversation by day and by night."[1] The fact that he did not have the vocabulary of the modern pastoral psychologist makes his language much more meaningful. For, Asbury did not attempt to adjust his approach to any existing school of thought but used a descriptive vocabulary in order to express what was actually taking place.

It is possible to come nearer to Asbury's thoughts on his role as pastor to individuals when it is realized that he conceived of his pastoral task as that of directing a changing personality. Asbury made no attempt to super-impose a theory of counseling upon his pastoral work. He merely attempted to grasp the emotional needs of the individual as he saw them and bring about a solution. This was the process that was taking place in the numerous conversations previously quoted from October 28, 1799. Distressing cases were coming to Asbury of both ministers and people and he was talking over their problems with them.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (October 26, 1799), II, 430.

The conversation flowed two ways. The individual brought his questions and problems before the pastor who listened intently with questions of clarification from time to time. The questions were not stilted nor was the conversation formal. Asbury explains many of his talks with his parishioners as being "serious conversations." It would seem that after the introductory statements, Asbury would take control of the course of the conversation by the tone of his voice, the phrasing of statements, or the direction of his questioning. Such guidance was acceptable to the counselee because of the force of the personality of the counselor and the depth of the rapport established.

In the course of the interview Asbury often felt free to admonish the individual, to remind him of the rules of the society, or point out possible results from his course of action. The suggested answer to the counselee did not always result in his gaining insight nor his acceptance of the solution, which Asbury reflects when he says, "and I hope it was not in vain."[1]

Asbury seems to have had a guiding theory for his counseling in which he attempted as far as was in him possible to permit the individual to express himself. This was hampered at times by the depth of Asbury's convictions. Many a dynamic conversation was brought to a close without complete insight by the counselee into his own problem and acceptable solutions because of the directive approach in solving the situation. Asbury's marked success in the personal ministry was due largely to his ability to relate well to people in conversation and understanding.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 1, 1773), I, 76.

Asbury is typical of a period in the history of pastoral psychology when the pastor was given to much conversation. He had remarkable success in light of his limited understanding of the psychological theories of personality which have since been evolved to aid the pastor in his counseling.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMERGING CONCEPTS OF THE EARLY METHODIST MINISTER

1. THE ROLES OF THE EARLY METHODIST MINISTER

In our examination of the ministry of Francis Asbury we have found certain roles which have become an intimate part of the pastor's life. In most areas of the pastoral ministry Asbury could be considered as having been typical of his era. This changed somewhat in his later years when the press of church administration absorbed much of his time. On each emerging concept, space would not permit its being traced to the present. The writer will therefore merely call attention to some of the remnants that remain of some of these early emerging concepts. One of the roles of the minister has been that of preaching.

i. Preacher and Pastor.

The Methodist minister has always considered himself first and foremost a preacher. This concept of his role in the church has emerged from this colonial period where the emphasis was on exhortation. The tendency has been for the Methodist preacher to resist the temptation to serve the parish as a priest. Early in Asbury's colonial ministry social pressure encouraged his laying aside the clerical garb of the Anglican bishop which he would have liked to assume. Strickland, in writing of Asbury's preaching, says, "Although not an orator, he was dignified, eloquent, and impressive."[1]

The evangelistic sermon was the predominant sermon of the period. The message of grace and comfort did not find its way into the pulpits of the Methodist minister as frequently as it does in the present day. The length of the sermons among the Methodists, and many of the other clergy of the colonial period, has become proverbial. It has been said that Mather Byles, "used to preach his one hour; then taking the hour-glass in hand and turning it over, he would say, 'Now we will take a second glass.'"[2] Journal entries on Asbury's preaching would bear out this same impression.

It must be recognized that during this era almost every event suggested a discourse from the preacher. The Methodist minister, with his love for speaking, took full advantage of this practice in order to bring his message to the people. In the round of his circuit he preached almost every day of the week. This practice was necessary since his parish was scattered and he stopped at the log cabins along the trail where he delivered his sermons.

The change of social and cultural patterns has altered many of these customs. As the communities became more thickly populated the congregations grew in numbers. The minister was soon able to spend less of his time traveling from one preaching service to the next. This permitted his assuming many of the responsibilities formerly performed by

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1. Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, p. 144.

2. Frank Samuel Child, The Colonial Parson of New England (New York: The Baker and Taylor Co., 1896), p. 20.

the local preacher. In this way, the minister became more of a pastor to his people. A greater percentage of his ministry could now be given to the visiting of the sick and the adjusting of the personal problems within his parish.

The colonial Methodist preacher was not a learned man. The requirements for the ministry were a personal conviction, the ability to speak and great courage. This was in keeping with the frontier of which he was a part. Luccock points up the rugged quality of the preacher's personality when speaking of Peter Cartwright:

> In the early days of his itinerant ministry in backwoods Kentucky there was a tavern kept by a notorious bully. His loud and repeated boast was, 'No preacher gets past here.' Cartwright was riding circuit in that neighborhood; he had heard the boast, but kept right on riding. News of the preacher's coming was carried to the tavern keeper, who came out as he saw Cartwright approaching. The bully ordered the preacher to turn back or be beaten up. Peter Cartwright never liked to be 'ordered' by anyone, not even, in his later years, by all the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church! He got off his horse, and the fight was under way. He soon had the tavern keeper on the ground and pummeled him lustily, while singing, 'All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name.' He made the bully promise to stop interfering with preachers. But Peter had to sing three verses before the man agreed.[1]

His actions may not have been in accord with modern thought but they were in harmony with the wilderness frontier. Courage and convictions were evident at all times in the life and experience of the frontier preacher.

With the introduction of Methodist schools and colleges, there came a cultural change in the laity and clergy. It was necessary for the minister to keep pace educationally with his parishioners. Seven years

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1. Halford E. Luccock, Endless Line of Splendor (Chicago: The Advance for Christ and His Church of the Methodist Church, 1950), pp. 50-51.

of formal school, and a thorough understanding of the Bible, was sufficient education for Francis Asbury. This was training beyond that of the average member of his congregation. Yet Asbury had learning beyond that of his formal schooling. He had learned to read in Hebrew and Greek and was well read in the religious writings of his day. The educational offerings within the Church inevitably elevated the cultural standards of the minister. A preacher now spent less time on the trail in travel and preached fewer sermons in the course of the week. It was, however, necessary that he give more time to the preparation of a variety of sermons. The longer the time spent in the local parish, the greater was his expanding service to the individual's needs. The ability to meet these needs, however, demanded increased educational preparation.

A remnant of the earlier practice of the self-trained man still remains in our Methodist Church. It is still possible in many of the Methodist Conferences to enter the full time ministry through the conference course of study. In those areas where the educational standards permit it many of the preachers are being admitted through these home study courses.

The Methodist pastor of the colonial period, however, did not have as much continuing influence in the local community as the ministers of other denominations. The few hours spent with the local society and the frequent changes of circuits worked to the disadvantage of the local membership.

The concept of the Methodist minister as preacher has lingered in the minds of the Methodist people. As social and cultural conditions in the community have changed, the minister has been able to increase his skills to meet these growing demands. Thus, the modern minister has continued his role as a preacher while absorbing the pastoral functions formerly performed by his local preacher and class leader. The pastor is now, under his community church system, serving the same number of members as did the colonial circuit rider and serving them more effectively. It is now possible for the pastor with his superior skills to serve the whole person.

ii. Itinerant and Localized.

The Methodist itinerancy was a system used very effectively in colonial Methodism to scatter its few ministers over a vast frontier. It had even a greater value than this. It permitted the bishop to appoint his ministers in the areas of greatest need. Under the itinerant system it was possible for the minister to be moved frequently. An illustration of this was to be seen in the custom in the Virginia Conference for a pastor to remain on a circuit not longer than six months.[1]

It was believed that these frequent changes were for the good of both the parishioner and the minister. These changes may be attributed to a number of reasons. It was Asbury's fear that if a minister served an extended pastorate on one circuit he tended to find friends and did not care to leave them.[2] However, these frequent changes of pastorate were often necessary. The preacher had slight education. His extensive travels did not permit his reading as extensively as he might have otherwise desired. The time on the trail also served to limit his time allotted for the preparation of sermons. The available books were scarce. Those that were at his disposal had to be selected for they were limited by the space available in his saddle bags. It therefore helped the minister who, by frequent changes, could preach the same sermons over and over again.

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[1] Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, p. 126.

[2] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (January 1, 1772), I, 20.

Little attention was given to the continuance of the married minister in the itinerancy until 1804 when Asbury suggested that it might be more profitable to accept married men than to lose them by marriage and "location."[1] It had been the custom for the young man to enter the itinerant ministry and travel until he married. At the time of his marriage, he requested permission of the Conference to locate. Many of these located preachers continued to serve the church as local preachers or class leaders.

The process of "locating" tended to maintain a younger ministry in the frontier churches. They were men filled with enthusiasm and through their zeal Methodism was carried to the furthest frontier. The itinerant pastor filled a special role in the history of Methodism. Through the itinerant minister, Methodism was able to keep pace with the moving frontier.

The concept of the traveling ministry has not disappeared from the Methodist system. It has changed from its original structure. The minister in the present age is appointed to a charge for a year. He does not continue on indefinitely as the pastor of one church but must be reappointed each year. His membership is ~~not~~ in a local church but in the Annual Conference. At least in theory he is an itinerant minister of a Conference. This concept, which has come down from the colonial days, is important since it permits the bishop to appoint his ministers where they are most needed for the good of the Church.

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[1] Wakeley, Heroes of Methodism, pp. 48-49.

iii. Persuader and Healer.

A large part of Asbury's time was given to the ministry of persuasion. Every sermon was an attempt to convince the listener of the reality of the Christian faith. The sermons were developed with a sense of logical precision. They were carefully documented on Biblical authority. The revivalistic sermon was measured by the success or failure of the altar service. The minister was never satisfied until he had touched the emotions of his hearers and moved them to a decision.

The concept of the minister as a persuader comes from the faith that stands behind his words. It is his firm belief that his message is all important. This idea did not emerge from the colonial period itself but was a part of the Christian faith.

The minister has come to see the close linkage between the body and the soul of man. He is both their spiritual and physical healer. It is often difficult to distinguish whether Asbury is talking of a sickness of the body or of the soul. He believed that prayer was of value in healing the body as it was in transforming the soul. The efficacy of prayer was never doubted. Asbury believed in the use of the medical physician but on many occasions there was no physician present nor available. He does not suggest, however, that the minister assume the role of the physician. He does suggest that through the pastor's extensive experience he could offer certain home remedies which might ease the pain of the afflicted and then offer a prayer that would muster their faith.

The concept of the minister as an instiller of faith antedates Asbury. He did, however, even as the modern minister, by his presence, bring a sense of the divine presence, reminding the afflicted that we are not alone. The sense of faith and strength, reflected in the positive character of the minister, brings to the patient the comfort of hope. An illustration of Asbury's use of prayer is to be seen in his call on a sick woman who was at the point of death on July 18, 1774. Near the end of the visit Asbury says, "I prayed to God in her behalf."[1] The Journal fails to mention Asbury's use of the Scripture with the sick, but it is almost impossible that Asbury should not have used this invaluable resource. The writer would be more inclined to believe that it was so much a part of every sick visit that Asbury neglected to make reference to it.

The reader might become critical of Asbury when he is aware of some of the remedies Asbury would recommend to his parishioners. Bloodletting and poultices, which were his frequent remedies, were common practices on the frontier. It must be understood that Asbury had a limited knowledge of medicine and physicians were few. Asbury was doing what from his experience seemed best. His desire to help was his authority for entering the sickroom. Cabot and Dicks have suggested that a part of the minister's

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal, I, 119.

task may be that of straightening the sheet, adjusting the pillow, or quietly standing by that the sick might gain confidence.[1] Asbury was attempting to perform the same function but did not have the accumulated wisdom of the modern pastor.

The modern minister would not think of recommending treatment to the sick unless it was in the form of first aid measures until the physician could arrive. Asbury did recognize the spiritual needs of the afflicted and considered his services at this time of need indispensable to the sufferer. Even though Asbury appears to have thought of the close relationship which exists between mind and soul, the modern thinker must be careful lest he superimpose modern thought where it did not exist. Much of Asbury's spiritual treatment for the physical body was through a lack of understanding rather than an understanding of the interrelationship between body and soul.

Many of our modern resources in the pastoral treatment of the sick were in use in this earlier period. There have been such resources as the sense of mission, the power of prayer, the Scripture, and the growth of faith. To these the modern pastor has been able to add modern enlightenment. He goes to the sick bed as a part of a medical and spiritual team. The clergyman has the advice of the physician and the guidance of the hospital chaplain. The pastor, in his preparation for the ministry, is trained in the psychology of personality and the interrelationship between the physical and the spiritual.

The frontier pastor served a valuable function in the wilderness with his home remedies and spiritual resources. He was less able adequately to meet the needs of the individual, however, than the hospital chaplain who understands both the physical and the spiritual needs and the relationship of each to the other.

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[1] Cabot and Dicks, The Art of Ministering to the Sick, p. 12.

iv. Administrator and Promoter.

Among the many responsibilities of Asbury in his pastoral office was that of administrator and promoter. Asbury never ceased to be a pastor wherever he could but the responsibilities of administration took much of his time.

All the early Methodist ministers had extensive administrative responsibilities in their assigned circuits. Asbury had the administration of the whole church. With the passing of years these duties took more and more of his working day. In the first few years of his ministry he could ride over much of his area in the course of a year. In this way he was able personally to answer problems and adjust administrative difficulties. As his health continued to fail, and the church continued to expand, it became necessary that he depend more and more upon the written letter. In 1796 he writes, "I suppose I must write nearly a thousand letters a year."[1]

Much of his correspondence was in answer to letters written him by ministers, laymen, and friends. On December 20, 1802 he took care to ride to a quiet place where he could enjoy a little solitude, but mainly where he could have some time to answer letters. He writes, "I rode down to

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (January 21, 1796), II, 289.

James Rembert's upon the head of Black River, I came here that I might enjoy a little solitude, and find time to answer my Northern letters. Until Friday evening I was pretty well occupied in writing."[1] He reveals the scope of his letter writing in his entry of January 13, 1800. On this occasion he was so occupied with the writing of letters that he did not bother to keep his journal from one week to the next. He writes, "I have kept no journal from Sabbath to Sabbath. I have been employed in reading and answering letters to different and distant parts of the continent."[2]

The letters were not confined to the answering of the questions of those who saw fit to write to Asbury. On a number of occasions there were certain projects which Asbury wished to promote among the various societies. He would promote these through personal letters to the various clergy across Methodism. In an entry of November 27, 1785 he says, "Unwilling to be idle, I wrote to the preachers to do what they could in collecting money to carry on the building of our college."[3] Promotion this time seems to have been a way of filling a few idle moments, and carrying on the work faithfully.

There was always the arranging of his tours. He mentions on a number of occasions definite appointments for preaching. These incidents are sufficiently frequent to suggest that his travels were thoroughly planned. In 1795 he mentions such planning, "I laid out a plan for my travels in 1797; through Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Province of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. Making a distance of twelve or fifteen hundred miles."[1] Such planning was a whole year in advance. Nothing definite is said as to how the different preaching places were notified as to when Asbury would be arriving to preach but it would seem safe to suggest that such arrangements were by letter.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal, III, 96.

[2] Ibid., (January 13, 1800), II, 440.

[3] Ibid., I, 503.

Traveling to and presiding over the various annual conferences absorbed a part of his time. During Asbury's lifetime, except for the last two years, he personally took charge of every annual conference in American Methodism. He also planned and supervised the general conferences.

The burden of appointments also weighed upon the Bishop, for the ministers were not always satisfied with their assignments. There were also the special appointments such as the confirming of Ezekiel Cooper as agent of the Book Concern. Of that conference Asbury wrote, "The Conference was large, and the business very important. Ezekiel Cooper was confirmed in his appointment by me as our agent in the Book Concern."[2]

There was the constant shifting of population and the growth of new frontiers. This was always a challenge to Asbury. It meant, however, the recruitment and assigning of new men to new areas of service. Asbury noticed the hundreds who were crossing the mountains to the west and noted:

> What a road have we passed. Certainly the worst on the whole continent, even in the best weather. Yet, bad as it was, there were four or five hundred crossing the rude hills while we were. I was powerfully struck with the consideration that there were at least as many thousand emigrants annually

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (August 10, 1795), II, 274.

[2] Ibid., (June 6, 1799), I, 415.

> from East to West. We must take care to send preachers after these people.[1]

It was among these western hills that the camp meeting emerged to meet the needs of these people. The camp meeting required little promotion. The people were ready to receive this new emphasis. The part that Asbury played in its promotion cannot be determined. The fact that he was instrumental in such promotion is reflected in the enthusiasm with which he accepts the rapid spread of its success.

The prayer meeting was another one of Asbury's favorite projects. A number of entries show his hand in its promotion. On June 13, 1786 he wrote, "My mind has been deeply impressed with the necessity of getting the people to set apart the five o'clock hour wholly for prayer; to establish prayer meetings, and to speak evil of no man."[2] Again he says, "I pressed them to have prayer meetings, and they appointed one before they parted."[3]

The pastor has many of the functions of administration and promotion to perform today. The minister's role, however, is largely that of administering the local church. This role as seen in the life of Asbury included many of the responsibilities of the present day bishop and district superintendent. It is in this division of the pastoral office where Asbury becomes less typical of the pastor's role in the parish ministry.

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[1] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (June 6, 1799), II, 415.

[2] Ibid., I, 512-513.

[3] Ibid., (September 2, 1779), I, 324.

2. THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF ASBURY TO THE COLONIAL MINISTRY

Francis Asbury was more than a frontier preacher, he was a bishop who assumed the pastoral oversight of his people. He performed the functions of a bishop, made pastoral visitations, distributed tracts, aided in building houses of worship, raised funds for worthy causes, and encouraged religious education. Many of his contributions were not in the way of new ideas but the continuance of such established customs as: the class meeting, visitation of the sick, family visitation, and the itinerant ministry.

There are those who would argue that the use of these existing customs does not constitute a contribution. They are contributions, however, when it is within a man's power either to continue or discontinue a practice. The promotion of an existing program, until it is elevated to a new level of usage, is a definite contribution. In other areas Asbury was the creator or the adapter of an old method in a new way.

Every reader is entitled to his own choice as to Asbury's greatest contribution to the Methodist Church. The writer would suggest that the moving of preachers out of the established city churches and into a frontier ministry was Asbury's greatest contribution. Asbury, through this example, moved away from the custom of placing a minister in a city parish which was the custom at the time ofhis arrival in America. The ministers in both the Methodist and the other churches of 1771 tended to assume a city pulpit, gather about them a group of friends, and settle down content to minister to the local group. Asbury saw that the real challenge to Methodism was to be found in ministering to the frontier people who had no local denominational ties.

Out of this traveling ministry developed the itinerant system with its short pastorates and frequent moving. It made possible the moving of ministers into the more frontier areas and gave Methodism a fresh growing edge among non-Methodist people. It was this forward look, encouraged by Francis Asbury, that permitted Methodism to move from the coastal areas and become a nation-wide Church. It must be admitted that Asbury lived only long enough to see the church move westward as far as the Mississippi river, but the pattern once established continued to carry the church ever westward.

The circuit ministry was employed in England and by other denominations in America but it was most effective under the Methodist's direction. Asbury set the example of a circuit ministry by riding an estimated two hundred and seventy-five thousand miles[1] and preaching seventeen thousand sermons.[2] Such an example is a remarkable contribution within itself. The true success of the itinerant ministry continued to develop as it was adapted to the growing needs of Methodism.

Many of Asbury's contributions were administrative in nature. As he presided over some two hundred and twenty-four conferences, he had the privilege of molding the administrative practices of the Methodist Church. He created the General Conference. In 1808 Asbury introduced the plan of representation to the General Conference. The idea was not original with Asbury but has been credited to Jesse Lee.[3] The Methodist Church was at this time founded on a permanent constitution.

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[1] Luccock and Hutchinson, The Story of Methodism, p. 235.

[2] Strickland, The Life and Times of Francis Asbury, p. 495.

[3] Asbury, Asbury's Journal (July 7, 1791), II, 128.

The selection of the administrative officers of the Methodist Church was established by Asbury's precedent. Asbury refused to accept Wesley's appointment to be superintendent of the Methodist Church in America unless it would receive a similar approval by his fellow ministers. His refusal to accept the superintendency by appointment led to the election of the bishops by the clergy. This was a change from the appointive system suggested by Wesley and in practice in the Anglican Church. Whether Coke played a part in establishing the title to this office cannot be determined. The weight of criticism was focused on Asbury for his assumption of the title of bishop. This criticism would suggest that Asbury first introduced this title for the highest office in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Francis Asbury contributed to the complexion of the Methodist ministry by a gradual transition from a celibate to a married ministry. This was accomplished not by example but through necessity. The acceptance of married ministers into the conference encouraged the young minister who married to retain his active relationship in the conference.

Asbury introduced the conference owned center. He called it a circuit parsonage, but in our present day practice it would have been similar to an area or district office center. The first such center was held by the South Carolina Conference in 1803.[1] The building is referred to as a parsonage, but was not a parsonage in the modern sense. It had rooms for the lodging of visiting ministers. This building was designed for the use of the preachers and the conference and Asbury found it a great comfort.

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[1] Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal, p. 539.

The personal interest shown by Asbury in the early Methodist colleges is reflected in his house-to-house collection of funds. The idea of founding colleges may be credited to Coke. The continued growth and expansion of the college system was in a large part the influence of Asbury. The same could be said of the founding of the Publishing House. In this instance, however, Asbury had a more direct responsibility for its creation and development. He initiated the practice of the profits being used for the support of the retired ministers.

One other area of Asbury's influence was to be found in the establishment of the Methodist Sunday School. The Sunday School movement in the Methodist Church begins with the action of the conference of 1790. Of this conference Asbury said, "Our Conference resolved on establishing Sunday schools for poor children, white and black."[1] The past had given emphasis to the preaching ministry and the instruction of adults and older young people. Asbury now, with the permission of the conference, turns to the religious education of the children.

The introduction of the camp meeting to Methodist circles was Asbury's contribution to this movement. Asbury did not create the camp meeting spirit but capitalized on its presence. The Methodist Episcopal Church of the frontier period was open to the camp meeting methods. The itinerant preacher was free to move as the need demanded. The Methodist doctrine was in harmony with the emotional attitude of the camp meeting revivalism. The only requirement necessary to make the camp meeting a dynamic force in the frontier settlements was a spreading of its methods.

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1. Asbury, Asbury's Journal (February 17, 1790), II, 73.

It is the writer' belief that Asbury served as a missionary spreading the camp meeting program. The faith of the bishop in the success of the camp meeting soon transformed it into a Methodist movement. What had begun in the Presbyterian Church was soon closely linked with the Methodist fellowship.

Among Asbury's pastoral contributions was that to the success of the class meeting on the American scene. He was unable to regularly attend the classes but served as a pastor to as many of these individual classes as his time permitted. He tried to keep them religiously centered and psychologically relevant. The class system was already in use when Asbury arrived in America. Thus it is, that not the origin of the American class, but its continued growth could be attributed to Asbury.

As social and cultural changes began to affect the willingness of the individual class member to share his innermost thoughts, to resist the superimposing of class standards, and the rigid checking of class attendance, the class began to decline. Asbury suggested what may appear to have been a second choice. He encouraged the practice of the prayer meeting. It is impossible to say that it was a second choice, but such it would appear since it was not introduced into Methodism until the class-meeting had begun to lose its effectiveness. The decline of the class meeting can be seen in the decrease in entries referring to the class meeting. At the same time Asbury appears to be making fewer entries in his Journal concerning the class he shows an increased interest in the prayer meeting. The absence of entries does not prove but suggests that the emphasis has now changed from the class meeting to the prayer meeting. The prayer meeting was not only showing a continued growth but was being promoted by Asbury in the societies as a means of meeting the spiritual needs of the people.

The prayer meeting continued to provide the pastor's close relationship with his people. It promoted the spirit of devotion and continued the sharing of emotions. This sharing, however, was on a more general level and less threatening to the individual. The permissive spirit that existed was more acceptable to the individual member. It is possible to say that the prayer meeting rather than being a second choice was the creation of a new instrument to meet the changing individual needs.

This same friendly pastoral spirit was carried over into the home through the pastoral visit. Family visitation was always recognized as a part of the pastor's function. The pastor, however, has not always seen fit to give all his available time to such calling. Asbury leaves the impression that when nothing else was pressing he spent his time going from house to house calling upon his people. This gave him the opportunity to counsel with the family and with the individual members of the family. The contribution is not in the form of a new concept in the pastoral ministry. It is the introduction of calling into American Methodism so that ministers of succeeding generations have been able so to build upon this precedent that church families have come to accept these pastoral visitations as a regular part of the Methodist minister's office.

The calling upon the sick and the imprisoned may be considered a contribution only in so far as it was carried on and passed on to succeeding generations of pastors as a pastoral function. Asbury did not alter the relationship of pastor and patient. He may have highlighted the pastor's role but others have done the same.

Time and again Asbury returned to the idea of preaching to the individual. This is not a new concept in Christianity, but the continued emphasis upon it in a pastor's ministry shows that it stood out as an important medium of communication. Asbury did not contribute a new method of counseling, but he did call attention to the dynamic relationship which exists between counselor and counselee, or pastor and parishioner. Asbury suggested to his fellow ministers that they must learn to listen and control their own flow of conversation, but as for himself he found it most difficult to practice.

The colonial church profited much because of Asbury's ability to understand human personality. His contribution to the pastor's relationship with his parishioners was not new but rather a fresh emphasis. Just as Asbury found it possible to build on the foundation of others, so has the Church been able to adapt the work of Asbury. The contributions of Asbury were but stepping stones in the ever-expanding pastoral ministry of the Methodist Church.

3. THE CONTINUING AND CHANGING ROLES OF THE METHODIST MINISTER

The pastoral methods of Francis Asbury have had some lasting effects in the life of the Church. Yet, the changing social environment has made it necessary that many of his ideas be changed to meet the needs of a growing Church.

The effect of the marriage of the ministers has brought about a change in their role in the itinerant system. The desire of Asbury for a circuit ministry which was constantly transferring from one circut to another gradually disappeared as ministers began to marry and settle into village churches. To maintain the original concept of the itinerant ministry it would have been necessary to encourage the celibate ministry. The changing social conditions in America did not warrant the continuance of the type of circuit ministry with which Asbury was acquainted. The increase in population has made it more advisable for the pastor to serve a village church with a population equal to if not greater than that ministered to on the circuit. The increased educational standards of the minister and availability of resource material have made it unnecessary for the minister to move every six months in order to keep ahead with his sermon preparation. The alert pastor today can find it possible to remain in his parish for twenty years and with continued effort preach fresh and appealing sermons week after week. The pastor is no longer required to spend long hours on the trail. The established church makes it possible for him to give an increased pastoral ministry to the individual member of his parish.

The remnants of the colonial itinerancy are yet to be found in the yearly appointment of the Methodist minister. At least in theory the itinerancy continues to exist. The circuit system is reflected in the less populated areas with their circuits. These exist for the same reason as did the circuit in the time of Asbury. The change has been in the ability of the pastor to meet the needs of his people. Rather than a shorter stay on the circuit, the pastor finds that the longer he remains the better rapport he can establish with his people. Therefore, the minister of today is better able to serve his people than the minister of Asbury's time.

The modern minister, because of his extended pastorates and greater demands of the community, must have greater ability and be more versatile at his task than would have been required in Asbury's day. To meet these expanding needs he has found it necessary to specialize. He is today faced with more competition than ever before in history. Albert Palmer writes, "He has to be more versatile than the Sunday paper, more alluring than a baseball game, more interesting than the movies and better informed than the latest book."[1] The minister no longer has popular opinion on his side. His greatest advantage is that the world about him is specialized and he is the authority in his own areas.

The rapid social and industrial changes have altered the role of the minister. Asbury was already beginning to feel these changes in 1786 when he complained, "I cannot get the people to attend preaching except on the Sabbath."[2] The frontier society gave little attention to the Sabbath, but they hungered for social activity and a religious service tended to fill this need.

Where the ministers are meeting the needs of the people their services are still in demand. In order to meet and understand these growing needs the pastoral ministry is specializing. One of the earliest specialists was the evangelist. The camp meeting and the large city revivalistic services were but expressions of a felt need. As previously mentioned the class meeting gave way to the prayer meeting. Each of these met the social and spiritual needs of the people of their time.

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1. Albert W. Palmer, The Minister's Job (New York: Willett, Clark and Company, 1937), p. 4.

2. Tipple, The Heart of Asbury's Journal (July 30, 1786), pp. 247-248.

It need not be true that a new development which replaces another, is but a second choice. It is more likely that the institution has changed to meet the needs of its members. Whereas the Methodist Church was once a revivalistic frontier church, it has now become a community church with a more stately service. Its people are more highly educated and less emotionally explosive. This cultural change of climate has not made the ministry of the Church less effective but more effective. The minister finds less need to dwell at one level; he can concern himself with all the basic needs of the personality.

In the larger city churches this change has made it possible for the church to employ teams of ministers. Each minister is trained as a specialist in a limited area of the pastoral ministry. This is possible because of the large membership within the individual church and the increased understanding of the pastor's task. One minister finds it possible to limit his activities to the pulpit, to the radio, television, and such other mediums; a second makes the rounds of the homes in family visitation, while the third deals with the many counseling situations of a large parish. There is the professional administrator trained in the art of church finance, and the educator who concentrates on the educational activities of the parish.

Outside the local church the specialization continues. Hospitals are adding full-time chaplains to their staffs to assist and advise the pastor and physician concerning the ill. The chaplain is a specialist in the art of the bedside ministry. He knows the emotional symptoms of the various ailments and can bridge the gap between the patient, the pastor and the physician.

The centralization of prisons in the modern age makes it impossible for the local pastor to travel daily or even weekly to counsel his imprisoned member. In most instances the local pastor would have neither the experience nor the training necessary for him to bring about the desired readjustment in the life of the prisoner. The local pastor therefore makes an occasional visit to the prison and leaves the specialized prison ministry to the prison chaplain.

Anton Boisen in his study of church customs recognizes that since 1890 there has appeared a group of new churches such as: The Pentecostal Assemblies of God, The Church of God, A Church of Jesus Christ, The Free Methodist, and several others. In these new churches he notes that, "I find somewhat the same type of service and somewhat the same message I used to hear in the Methodist Church years ago."[1] The Church in its advance has found it impossible to meet all the needs of all the people. The result has been that new groups have developed to meet other needs not fully met by the established churches.

In the many areas of the pastoral ministry, Asbury recognized the need and tried in his naive way to minister to his whole parish. His efforts were but an outline of what the ministry of the church was to become. Whereas Asbury recognized the needs within the parish, the modern minister with his superior training is beginning to find enlarging ways to meet these needs.

There have emerged from the ministry of the early Methodists trends of emphasis. These trends have not been fixed but were sufficiently flexible to permit each generation to adapt them to its changing problems. It has been this flexibility and developing insight that has been one of the great strengths of the Methodist Church.

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[1] Anton T. Boisen, Religion in Crisis and Custom (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1955), p. 14.

In Chapter six the writer has viewed Asbury in his role as an early Methodist minister. Pointing out the areas of his contributions to the Church and to Methodism. Many of these contributions have changed with the passing of time. In a changing society, a growing church must adjust its approach to the needs of the people. Through this process of adjustment the work of Asbury has often faded and his contributions been clouded with time.

In Chapter seven the writer will view the ministry of Asbury as a whole. He will draw together his conclusions and view them in the light of their contributions to the present day pastoral ministry.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The problem of this study is to find some of the guiding principles which Francis Asbury considered important in his pastoral ministry. Asbury served American Methodism during forty-five of its most important and formative years. Through his ministry he established by precedent programs and procedures which have guided the Methodist pastor in his parish work. The rapid growth and expansion of Methodism testifies to the success of Asbury's ministry and leadership.

Since the beginning of religious history spiritual leaders have used psychology in their ministry to both the individual and the group. Much of this ministry was unscientific but developed through a process of trial and error. Asbury was no different than the others. He was not a psychologist. He arrived at certain goals because of his understanding of human personalities and an accumulated experience. An understanding of these relationships will contribute to a greater insight into the historical background of our modern pastoral psychology.

The material for this study is historical. The primary sources are the personal letters and journals of Francis Asbury. The secondary material are the works and the writings about Asbury and the period in which he ministered. Since no secondary material was written on the life and work of Asbury until thirty-six years after his death, it is necessary to rely heavily upon the Journals for information. The secondary works fill in the gaps and verify the conclusions drawn from the Journals.

The use of personal documents for psychological study has been established through precedent. Allport, following a study on the use of personal documents in scientific research, concluded that much of the scientific research of the past has made use of the personal document. Many of these were uncritical in their methods. The critical use of such documents is now about two decades old. These documents have an unquestionable place in modern research and supply the most accessible resources for many of our scientific studies.

In evaluating a document for psychological study, four criteria have been established; is the document adequate for the purpose for which it is to be employed? Is it representative? Is it reliable? Do the interpretations of its author tend to be valid?

One of the primary values of the autobiography is that it gives that inner half of the life which is ordinarily hidden to the scientist. In the interpreting of the entries of a Journal it is necessary that the interpreter realize that a few lines may represent many years, while many pages may represent only a single experience. To establish a lawful pattern the frequency of an entry need not be synonymous with this pattern nor does a single entry deny the existence of such a law. The frequency with which an item is mentioned becomes significant when the material under study is an adequate sample and the author has tended to keep a full and accurate journal of all events and experiences.

A second basis of evaluation exists where two items appear in the same incident. Such incidents can be considered as having some relationship. This later method must be used with caution for some writers have tended to combine completely unrelated incidents in the same entry.

Asbury's Journals are the most complete source material for the Methodist period under consideration. There may have been a change of motivation for his writing as he came to his later years. He began his Journals, however, for his own enlightenment. They are, therefore, not complete but representative of what he considered important in the period in which he ministered. Since they were written for his own use there would be little value in his use of misrepresentation nor the falsification of entries. Some entries are not complete. On such entries it is necessary to disregard the entry or use it in relation to later studies and secondary material. The reliability of Asbury's conclusions have for the most part stood the test of time. Later historians have not altered his judgment in many instances.

The second task was the classification of Journal entries. Such classification had to be considered both for their verbal and emotional content. Out of this classification grew such groupings as: the small group; visitation to the family, the sick, and the prisoner; the funeral; counseling; and the minister as preacher. It was then possible to view the entries individually and in their relationship to other entries in the same area of pastoral ministry.

The present study is the first attempt to see the relationships which existed between Francis Asbury and his parishioners. There have been historical studies made of Asbury's life. The earliest of these was by William C. Larrabee in 1852. A more complete biography came six years later by William Peter Strickland which pictures Asbury in the surroundings in which he lived. Ezra Squier Tipple published an improved edition of

Asbury's Journal in 1904. This work has corrected many of the mistakes found in the original journals and has added many valuable editorial comments.

The Epworth Press is now in the process of collecting through the Methodist Historical Societies detailed information as to names, locations, letters and such other information as can be found available for a new edition of the Journal which is now being edited by Elmer T. Clark of Lake Junaluska, North Carolina. Typewritten editorial notes were made available for this study by Mr. Clark and the Epworth Press.

Francis Asbury was born on the twentieth or the twenty-first day of August, 1745 in Staffordshire, England. He was the only son of two children born to Joseph and Elizabeth (Rogers) Asbury. Little is known of his boyhood. His home life was very stern. He received seven years of formal education before being apprenticed at the age of fourteen to learn the business of buckle chapes.

Joseph Asbury was a gardener by trade. The religion of the family was largely the heritage of the mother. In Asbury's youth the family was of the Church of England but later joined with the Methodist societies. Asbury increasingly participated in the class meetings until at the age of twenty-six he gave himself to the full-time ministry. In 1766 he was assigned the Staffordshire and Gloucestershire areas. A year later he was admitted on trial for the itinerant ministry and was received into full connection in 1768.

In August of 1771 Asbury volunteered his services as a missionary to America. He set sail for America on September 4, 1771 with his fellow missionary Richard Wright.

At the time of Asbury's arrival in America in 1771 Methodism numbered less than four hundred members. These members were chiefly centered around New York and Philadelphia. The populated areas of America were mainly along the coastal regions. The log-cabin was still the home of the majority of families. The people were for the most part poor, and the itinerant preacher was in a similar situation. The pioneers were constantly moving westward and new settlements were always opening to those who wished to move. The people were hardened to the rough ways of the border areas. There were a few learned men scattered through the frontier but the majority had but enough education with which to get along.

The political relationships between the Colonies and Great Britain at the time of Asbury's arrival were strained. The change in colonial policy by Great Britain brought the political tension to a breaking point. The bitter controversy that followed seriously weakened both the political and emotional ties.

The religious ties of the Methodist missionaries caused them to be suspected of Loyalist sympathies. The mounting tensions resulted in the eventual return of all the missionaries to England with the exception of Francis Asbury. Asbury decided he would cast his lot with the rebellious colonists.

At the close of the Revolution Asbury found himself in a favorable position for leadership. He had served as superintendent under two separate appointments but at this time was not serving in this capacity. He was just twenty-seven when he was first appointed as General Assistant of the Methodist Societies in America. This appointment lasted for less than a year, when he was replaced by Rankin. Asbury's successor was a strict disciplinarian but had little sympathy with many of the colonial ideas. Asbury soon found himself out of favor with Rankin and through Rankin's influence received a summons to return to England.

Asbury's refusal to honor Wesley's request that he return to England can be considered either as insubordination or the divine providence of God working through human personalities. If Asbury had returned, his leadership may have been lost to the Methodist Church. It is doubtful if Asbury would have found it possible to have submitted to the direction of Wesley. His return may have meant the loss of the dynamic leadership which made Methodism a growing influence in this new nation.

During the war Asbury found himself in an embarrassing position in relation to the colonial authorities. His refusal to take the oath of allegiance and bear arms set a continuing precedent.

Since Asbury was the only missionary remaining in the colonies, he was looked to for leadership during the controversy over the administering of the ordinances. With the close of the war in 1783 he immediately assumed the leadership in uniting the scattered societies. In January, 1784 Asbury was again appointed by Wesley to the office of General Assistant in the American societies.

Asbury was shocked at first at the suggestion of Wesley through Dr. Coke that the American societies form a separate Methodist Episcopal Church. At the organizing conference Asbury established another precedent by his refusal to accept the appointment of Associate Superintendent along with Dr. Coke. His refusal led to the election of Methodist bishops by the popular vote of their fellow ministers.

There were a number of factors which influenced Francis Asbury's personality and his pastoral ministry. The first of these would have been his attitude toward the superintendency. Asbury believed one could best lead through one's example. He always considered himself the senior bishop on the American scene. Even after the election of associate bishops, he referred to them and considered them as his assistants.

Asbury thought of himself as a spiritual leader ministering to the needs of the people. He was a master strategist who preferred to work at the front of the action. Asbury had the tendencies toward being an arbitrary dictator. At best he was never a good follower.

Another factor that influenced his life's work was his health. Shortly after his arrival in America he became ill and during most of his ministry suffered from one ailment or another. A less resolute man would have given up the work and returned to England. The roughness of the American frontier only aggravated his condition.

Asbury's life of celibacy was a major factor in his influence upon the Methodist Church. It is not clear exactly why he did not marry. There is a thread of evidence that there may have been some mother attachment. It is more likely that an unfavorable romance in England hastened his decision to leave for America. As he entered upon his itinerant ministry the call of the frontier encouraged him to remain a bachelor. There was the ever present problem of replacing ministers "locating" for reasons of marriage.

Asbury's personality was largely a product of the frontier. The constant westward movement of the pioneers kept the spirit of the frontier alive. During Asbury's ministry he was often welcomed in a frontier cabin by an old friend who had moved from the east. The dangers of the wilderness and constant danger of Indian raids made Asbury as much of a frontiersman as the log cabin resident himself. Many of the qualities of personality which may have seemed objectionable in Asbury were but reflections of the frontier in which he lived. A man of less courage and dedication would have been unable to have conquered the frontier problems.

During Asbury's forty-five years of pastoral ministry on the American continent he was able to witness a transition in some of the activities of the minister. The frontier preacher was a man of high moral character. His education played a minor role in his life. Of greater importance were his experience and his emotional zeal. His message was a personal message sounded to stir the consciences of his people. He spoke equally well to both large and small crowds for his audience often consisted of one or possibly two families.

One of the great transitions in the ministry of Asbury was the growing emphasis on the camp meeting. The camp meeting had its beginnings in 1800 through what amounted to accidental circumstances. Its large social gatherings met a social need in an isolated people. Its violent emotional expressions were but the release of the repressed emotions of a lonely people. The Methodists encouraged the camp meeting, for it fit into the pattern of their machinery. The Methodist doctrine was in keeping with the camp meeting spirit.

The same social and cultural factors that were influential in the creation of the camp meeting brought about its wane. Changing social conditions on the frontier decreased the social need for the camp meeting. The increasing cultural standards of the laity and clergy decreased the emotional preaching. Where the camp meeting has continued it was usually on a lecture basis.

Revivalism was transferred to the city. Groups began to develop who gave a continuing emphasis on the revivalistic preaching. Revivalistic campaigns developed in the cities under the leadership of the professional evangelist.

The class, like the camp meeting, continued on beyond the life of Asbury. The class meeting, however, was beginning to experience social opposition and the members were coming to object to the intimate confessions required at the meetings. The prayer meeting was a less personal gathering. Yet it absorbed many of the more acceptable features of the class meeting. There were in it none of the rigid restrictions found in the class meeting.

The two continued on for some time with the prayer meeting gradually receiving priority. There are few, if any, living today who remember a class meeting, while there are many who can relate their personal experiences in the prayer meeting.

In the total ministry of Francis Asbury there would appear to have been a gradual transition from a ministry to the individual, to a ministry to the mass. This, however, was not accurate. It is true that Asbury did less calling on the prisoners, and to a less degree on the sick. This change of emphasis, however, was largely due to the increased administrative responsibilities. The revivalistic emphasis was as much a personal ministry as was his conversation with an individual. The emphasis of the ministry of this type was a personal gospel. The decisions that were to be made had to come from the individual himself.

There were a number of areas of emphasis in the ministry of Asbury. One of these emphasis would be that given to the small group. Asbury used the small group ministry very effectively through both the class meeting and the prayer meeting.

The Methodist societies had their beginnings in the Oxford Club at Lincoln College. As the Methodist societies grew in numbers Wesley divided the members into classes. These classes retained the personal touch so important to the edification and encouragement of the new convert. Membership in the society soon became dependent upon one's being enrolled in a class.

The Methodist class meeting was brought to the colonies by the Methodist immigrants. The class meeting was adaptable to a sparsely populated frontier where meeting houses were almost non-existent and the population scattered. The high standards of admission and rigid standards of conduct kept many persons out of the classes. These classes were conducted in the same manner as those in England. The sense of group feeling that developed within these classes gave these isolated individuals a sense of belonging.

The small intimate fellowship of the class gave opportunity for the individual to express many of his uncertainties about his spiritual life. The discussion, however, was not limited purely to the religious life. There was also the opportunity to release inner uncertainties and emotional drives.

The unity within the class was brought about through this sense of sharing. A failure to share ideas, fears or conflicts tended to destroy the group spirit. The behaviour of the group was controlled by a leader.

In this atmosphere it was easier for the new convert to align himself to the rigid standards of the society and at the same time meet the criticism he faced in his daily living.

Another area of pastoral emphasis was Asbury's practice of regular family visitation. Through such visitation he established rapport with the individual member of the society. The priority of a call was determined by the urgency of personal need. Asbury set aside no specific time for visitation. He scheduled his calls according to the general schedule of his pastoral rounds. Preaching always took priority and then came the class meeting, visitation of the sick, and finally house-to-house calling. Two things took place at every visit; instruction and prayer. The length of the call was unimportant, so long as the visit accomplished the maximum good. Regular ministering to the individual needs of the local society was carried on by the local preacher. The pastoral work of the itinerant minister was regular but selective.

Asbury recognized the need for ministering to the prisoners. His presence at the hanging of a prisoner served a dual purpose. He was interested in the spiritual transformation of the criminal and spiritual transformation of the gathered audience. There were times when Asbury concluded that the evidence warranted his interceding for the prisoner. With the increase of administrative functions, prison calling was one of the first services that he tended to neglect.

At the time of a death the preacher tried to be with the family. The nature of Asbury's responsibilities, however, made it impossible for him to be present except in a few instances. If he was acquainted with the family and in the community he would visit the family at the time of death. His numerous administrative responsibilities and continual traveling prevented his establishing any definite pattern on these occasions.

The funeral service was for the benefit of the living. Two types of services were traditional: the sermon of eulogy, and the doctrinal sermon. The sermon eulogy was generally reserved for a minister or saintly person. The doctrinal sermon was sufficient for the nominal Christian. Asbury and his pastors were not conscious of the need of relieving the relatives of grief feelings except through the hope inherent in the Christian faith. If this was accomplished in the funeral service it was only indirectly.

In Asbury's counseling with the individual his primary goal was the aligning of the spiritual goals. He met with the counselee always as the pastor and representative of God. His areas of counseling, however, were not always limited to the spiritual. He counseled on legal matters, pre-marital and family conflicts. He tended to create in his own thinking what he considered to be the best solution in the given instance. There were occasions where he would try to convince his counselee that he as counselor knew best what would be good for the counselee. One of the positive factors, however, in Asbury's counseling was his friendliness. In some instances where there was the need of spiritual counsel, Asbury's insistence and the counselee's lack of interest almost removed the interview from the area of counseling.

The most prevalent kind of counseling performed in this period was that of brief counseling. The number of counseling sessions were limited by the nature of the circuit system which required that the minister move from one society to the next in a matter of a few days. In Asbury's case, this movement was even more pronounced. Asbury used a form of counseling which he called, "individual preaching." In this he accepted a father's role. The success of this form of counseling depended upon the degree of established rapport. When the parishioner was aware of his felt need, the pastor was able to help. The pastor in accepting the fatherly role considered that he knew what was best and proceeded to prescribe the solution for the counselee.

Asbury often used this form of directive counseling. He would lead the counselee into the area of thought through a directing of the conversation. There were times when Asbury felt it was his pastoral responsibility to seek a person out for counseling. In such counseling Asbury often extracted the important facts of the interview and placed them in a concise summary. He would draw his own conclusions and proceeded to make his positive recommendations.

Asbury drew a distinction between spiritual and secular counseling. In the area of spiritual counseling he spoke as the pastor with a sense of spiritual mission. In his secular counseling he did not feel the same urge to effect a conformity to his ideals.

Asbury believed that it was essential for the pastor to listen in order to understand his parishioner. Listening, however, was difficult for Asbury. Asbury believed that the counselor should strive to have control of his own feelings. As the counselor learned to control his own emotions, he would at the same time learn to have an empathic understanding of the feelings of his counselee.

In the minister's visitation to the sick Asbury believed that the minister served a special function which none other could fulfill. This special function gave the minister the license to go into the sickroom where others would either be restricted or discouraged to go. The two-way conversation was one of Asbury's most productive methods in the sickroom.

Asbury was a fluent conversationalist. He would talk with the afflicted with a sympathetic understanding. One of his goals was to listen to the voice of God on the one side and the voice of man on the other.

He believed that prayer was a part of every sickroom call. To leave a patient without giving him the benefit of a prayer was to fail in that pastoral visit. There were no excusable reasons for not praying in the sickroom. If there were strangers present they could be given the choice of either remaining in an attitude of prayer or leaving the room until the prayer was completed.

Asbury offered no definite guide as to the frequency of calling upon the sick and shut-ins. He believed it was possible to call too often but does not define what he would have considered as too often. It is likely that regular visitation of the sick and shut-ins was a part of the responsibilities of the local preacher. The spiritual ministry to the sick and shut-ins was not therefore limited to the itinerant minister but was distended by the calling of the local preacher.

In our examination of the ministry of Francis Asbury we have found certain roles of the minister. The most predominant role of this period was that of preacher. The Methodist Episcopal pastor was not a learned man but was respected for his convictions. His actions may not have always been in keeping with modern society but were in harmony with the frontier of which he was a part.

The Methodist ministry was divided into two groups: the itinerant and the local minister. The itinerant minister was the full time active preacher assigned to a circuit. The local preacher may be licensed or ordained but ministered only a part of his time in a local society under the supervision of an itinerant minister.

Francis Asbury made a number of contributions to the Colonial church and the Methodist ministry. Many of his contributions were not new but a continuance of established practices. They must be considered contributions since it was within his power either to continue or discontinue a practice. When a man takes an existing practice and elevates it to a new level of usage, it is a definite contribution.

Some of Asbury's contributions have been:

1. The establishing of an itinerant ministry in American Methodism. Under this itinerant system the minister was appointed for a short pastorate over a large area. This system was more effective for the colonial period, however, than is possible under such a method today. It did serve to give most of the frontier a minimum of pastoral guidance.

2. Asbury did not introduce the class meetings into the American societies but he did encourage their continuation. The class meeting was the most effective pastoral tool with which the pastor had to work. Its group dynamics were of psychological value to the individual member. Through routine visitation to the class meeting the pastor was able to give personal supervision to the individual member of his society. If one factor were to be evaluated for its effectiveness in the establishing of rapport between the pastor and his people the class meeting is this factor.

3. As the class meeting began to wane, Asbury introduced and promoted the prayer meeting. The writer believes that the prayer meeting was a psychological advance over the earlier class meeting. The prayer meeting was a much more effective pastoral tool for effecting successful and complete confession and spiritual harmony within the life of the individual

member. The greater freedom within the meeting did not create resistance within the individual. The confessor could express his confessions at a rate at which his ego could accept. Under the more probing system found in the class meeting this rate of expression was not always controllable by the confessor.

4. Asbury, through his precedent, changed what might have been an appointive episcopacy to an elective episcopacy in the Methodist Church. The elective episcopacy tended to have two important effects upon the pastoral ministry. The popularity of the man who was elevated to the office of bishop through election made for better rapport between pastor and bishop. The traits which won the election continued on within the man and made it possible for the minister to approach his superior with confidence. The individual who was elected to the office of bishop was usually held in high esteem by his fellow ministers because of his ability in leadership. These are two qualities in the Methodist episcopacy which make for pastoral leadership among the clergy of the church.

5. He set the standards for the Methodist Episcopal ministry through his own example. Since the beginning of American Methodism the example of the minister has been as much a force in his ministry as his spoken word.

6. Asbury recognized the need for a married ministry. The family experience growing out of the family relationship better prepares the pastor for counseling in this large area of his pastoral ministry. The married minister is in a better position to both preach and counsel in the area of marital relations because of his personal marital experience.

As has been pointed out, Asbury did not create all that could be considered as his contribution to Methodism. His ability to organize and promote made many of the existing practices a greater success. Asbury had the ability to understand human personality and the insight to know what trends seemed best fitted for the ongoing future of the Church.

Some of his methods and practices have had a lasting effect. Others have had to be changed to meet the growing needs in the Church. The passing of time has wrought many changes in the minister's role.

Asbury's recognition of a married ministry has to a large extent altered the itinerant system in Methodism. The itinerant system in its modern form is much more effective for the present-day ministry. The Bishop still retains the power to move the minister to meet the needs of the Church, and yet the minister can remain in the local church until he has reached his maximum point of pastoral efficiency.

The modern pastor faces greater competition in his ministry than did Asbury. He must become more versatile and be able to perform his pastoral ministry exceptionally well. The social and industrial changes have moved the Church from the center of the community. Just as the social and cultural changes brought an end to the camp meeting, the class and the prayer meeting, so they are threatening his service of Divine worship.

Where the minister is meeting the needs of his people, the Church is still effective. The result has been a trend in the larger churches to employ a team of specialists in order to meet the growing demands of society. Asbury's effectiveness as a minister was the result of his willingness to adjust his pastoral methods to meet the psychological needs of his members in a changing society.

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PSYCHOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF THE PASTORAL MINISTRY OF FRANCIS ASBURY

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the ministry of Francis Asbury in the light of modern pastoral psychology. The study is to reveal the interpersonal relationships which existed between the pastor and his parishioners.

The study reveals that the work of Francis Asbury was basically a ministry to the individual. The mass meetings such as the class, the prayer meeting, and the camp meeting were in reality centered upon the individual. In the pastor's role as minister, the preaching ministry came first, then the visitation of the sick, the class meeting, and finally house-to-house calling.

Asbury used the group effectively in both preaching and in the class meeting. The use of the principles of the group were used to their fullest in the camp meeting. Asbury did not found the camp meeting movement but recognized its value in a scattered frontier. The rapid growth of the camp meeting was the result of its meeting the social and spiritual needs of this colonial people. Asbury was able to continue, in a large measure, the fruits of the camp meeting through the effective use of the class meeting.

Asbury found the group dynamics of the small class an effective means of promoting the Christian experience within the individual. As social conditions changed and the class meeting began to wane, Asbury saw fit to encourage the prayer meeting. The prayer meeting was less

threatening to the individual confessor. It permitted the member to more easily control the rate of confession without the sense of the group's probing.

In the ministry to the sick and shut-in Asbury believed that the minister served a special function which none other could fulfill. This special function gave the minister unrestricted entrance into the sickroom. Visitation of the sick came second only to the preaching ministry in the life of Asbury.

As a counselor Asbury was very directive. He would lead the counselee into the areas of thought which he as the counselor considered important through a directing of the conversation. In such counseling Asbury often extracted the important facts of the interview and placed them in a concise summary. He would draw his conclusions and make his positive recommendations.

Asbury distinguished between his role as spiritual and secular counselor. In the area of spiritual counseling he felt an urgency for the counselee's conforming with his ideal. The nature of Asbury's ministry necessarily limited his counseling to brief counseling. The number of counseling sessions were limited by his continued traveling. Asbury referred to a form of counseling which he called, "individual preaching." In this he accepted a father's role. The success of this form of counseling depended upon the degree of established rapport.

Asbury believed that it was essential for the counselor to listen in order to understand his parishioner. Listening, however, was difficult for Asbury. His success in counseling was due largely to his friendly personality, his fluent conversation, and his personal interest in the individual.

Much of the success of Asbury's ministry was due to his understanding of human personality, and his willingness to adjust his methods to the spiritual and psychological needs of his people. His continued success was the result of his dynamic and forceful personality.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Donald Delbert Douglass was born March 16, 1919 to the late James William and Tishie (Rosenberg) Douglass in Oil City, Pennsylvania. Donald was the seventh child in a family of ten. He had five brothers and four sisters.

Donald received his education in Oil City where he graduated in 1936. He entered the State Teacher's College of Clarion, Pennsylvania in 1939. He left to serve in the United States Army in 1941, serving for four years as an X-ray technician in the Army Medical Corps.

In 1945 he was admitted to the Boston University School of Education and graduated in 1946, with the degree of Bachelor of Science in Education. He began his studies in the School of Theology in 1946 and graduated with the Bachelor of Sacred Theology degree in 1949. That same year he entered the Boston University Graduate School to study toward the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology and Pastoral Counseling.

He served as Teaching Fellow in the School of Theology in 1954-55.

He entered the Methodist ministry in 1947 and has served churches in the New England Methodist Conference from 1947 through 1957. He is now the pastor of the First Methodist Church of North Andover, Massachusetts.

In 1943 he married Alberta Grace Riggins of Springfield, Massachusetts. They have two sons: Donald James, born February 9, 1947; and Keith Arthur, born April 27, 1950.